

September 28, 1996
COLUMN
Chateau snub for
Iraq leader's wife

Dublin meeting seeks to help Bosnia

DUBLIN (R) — Officials of more than 30 countries met in Dublin on Saturday at a United Nations conference aimed at raising \$99 million to help to build a democratic police force in post-war Bosnia. Several countries promised to consider providing money for the project, but few made any immediate pledges. The main financial contribution came from the United States, which announced a package worth \$17 million. Peter Fitzgerald, head of the U.N. International Police Task Force (UNPTF) which is overseeing the transition to a democratic civilian police force in Bosnia, said he was not disappointed with the immediate response. "Nobody can be disappointed when they are offered \$17 million cash up front and then other assistance after that," he told reporters after the conference.

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Moscow: CIA agent worked at U.S. embassy

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia's foreign ministry on Friday accused a man identified as a former third consular secretary at the U.S. embassy of being a Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agent who recruited a Russian to provide secrets on nuclear submarines. Ministry spokesman Mikhail Demurin identified the alleged American spy as John Sutter and said he worked at the embassy in Moscow from August 1991 to June 1994. "We know he works for the CIA," Mr. Demurin told reporters. Russian news agencies earlier this week said Mr. Sutter had recruited a Russian working at a naval research facility. The reports said the man, identified only as Finkel, was arrested a year ago in St. Petersburg. It was not clear why the incident was being disclosed now. "In principle, we do not comment on allegations about intelligence matters," said U.S. embassy spokesman Richard Hoagland.

Latest crisis vindicates Jordanian position on Jerusalem, King tells Cabinet

Monarch indicates Israel used sovereignty gap, which was covered by Washington Declaration, to open controversial tunnel
Jordan ready to coordinate with Palestinians on every step to face challenges to peace process
King calls on government to extend every help to Palestinians
Jordan working with S. Arabia to resolve Qatar-Bahrain dispute before ruling by World Court

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein said Saturday the recent crisis in Arab East Jerusalem between Israel and the Palestinians vindicated Jordan's position that there should not have been any gap in sovereignty over the Holy City.

Addressing a Cabinet session, the King pointed out that Israel had acknowledged Jordan's "special role" vis-a-vis Islamic holy places in Jerusalem in the Washington Declaration signed by himself and the late Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, in July 1994.

The Israeli acknowledgment had led to Palestinian protests and remained a serious irritant in Jordanian-Palestinian relations for some time.

In comments on the developments in Jerusalem following Israel's reopening of a tunnel running through Islamic holy shrines there, the King said the Palestinians had not made their stand clear on the Holy City and Jordan's role in the shrines there.

In his address to the Cabinet on Saturday, the King said Israel had used the gap in sovereignty over

Jerusalem to reopen the tunnel and that Jordan had no previous knowledge of Israel's plans.

The King reiterated Jordan's support for the Palestinians' quest for their full rights on their national soil and instructed the government to extend whatever help possible to the Palestinians.

Addressing the Cabinet, after meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti in the presence of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, King Hussein said the issue of sovereignty should not be a bargaining issue.

He said Israel's opening of the tunnel area which led to confrontations that left almost 60 Palestinians and 14 Israelis dead was an attempt by Israel to demonstrate that it has the only say in Jerusalem affairs.

The King said that the opening of the tunnel does not harm the holy places, but has to do with the issue of sovereignty, emphasizing that Jordan had no prior knowledge of the opening of the tunnel.

"This is something we reject and cannot approve of... we do not think that it serves peace, not at the



level of the followers of the three monotheistic religions nor at the level of the region in any way."

"Regarding Jerusalem and what happened, I think that it explains and justifies our position demanding that the issue of sovereignty should have no role in the Holy City and that there should be no reservations."

The King said once peace is achieved, the concerned parties should deal with all issues related to Jerusalem in a manner that guarantees the safeguarding of the rights of all concerned, suggesting that an international organization, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) play a role in that respect.

Stressing Jordan's historic, religious and moral links to Jerusalem, the King dwelt on the role of the Jordanian Armed Forces in defending the city in the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli wars.

"It is known that fighting, especially in Jerusalem, did not stop except when the brethren there asked me ... to stop the fighting which had already stopped in many other places ... after (our soldiers) carried out their duties in the best possible manner," King Hussein said, adding that Jordan, nevertheless, continued to shoulder its duties towards the city.

He said a misunderstanding arose as a result of the inclusion of a reference to Jerusalem in the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty signed in 1994, and added that particular reference was meant to safeguard Islamic, Palestinian and Arab rights in the city, especially that the Palestinian-Israeli accords left the issue for the final status negotiations.

Jordan, the King emphasized, will continue cooperation and coordination with the Palestinians on the issue

(Continued on page 7)

Palestinian police rein in protesters; clashes subside

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Palestinian police kept a lid on protests in most of the West Bank and Gaza on Saturday while the United States tried to arrange a Palestinian-Israeli summit to prevent a resurgence of violence threatening Middle East peace.

Palestinian police in riot gear prevented hundreds of youths from marching on an Israeli checkpoint at Ramallah, north of Jerusalem, scene of some of the fiercest fighting in the past four days which has claimed at least 70 lives.

They also thwarted protests in the West Bank town of Qalilia and at Rafah in the Gaza Strip, witnesses said.

U.S. diplomats met Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Gaza urging him to meet Israel's right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

Arafat and Netanyahu said to meet today, followed by summit with Mubarak, King

A DIPLOMAT said Saturday that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat were expected to meet Sunday on the Israel-Gaza border.

The summit was to be followed later by a Washington gathering that would bring together the Israeli and Palestinian leaders, as well as Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and King Hussein, said the diplomat, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

Spokesmen for both Mr. Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu said Saturday no time and place for a bilateral meeting had yet been set.

Earlier Saturday, Edward Abington, the U.S. consul in Jerusalem, met with Mr. Arafat in Gaza City to try and arrange a summit.

However, Mr. Arafat, when asked earlier Saturday whether he would meet with the Israeli leader, grumbled, "why for?"

The Palestinians on Saturday insisted on a meeting in Cairo with President Mubarak and perhaps European and

American officials present to guarantee any agreement.

Nabil Shaath, a senior member of Mr. Arafat's cabinet, said Saturday such guarantees were needed in light of Mr. Netanyahu's track record over the past three months.

Israeli officials have said they preferred the Gaza-Israel border as a venue.

Meanwhile Mr. Netanyahu said that Israel would never close the tunnel beside the Muslim holy site, in Jerusalem.

"The tunnel has been around for 2,000 years. It will stay open. It will always be open," he said in a speech to 6,000 visiting Christian supporters of Israel. "Israel doesn't make unilateral concessions any more. It actually demands a quid pro quo," he said.

"It does not speak well of the international community that it accepts this violence... as a legitimate aim... We go towards the path of peace in peace," Mr. Netanyahu told the crowd.

King honours Ali Omleil

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Saturday conferred upon the outgoing secretary-general of the Arab Thought Forum, Ali Omleil, Al Istiklal Medal of the First Order in appreciation of his services and efforts.

Kabariti receives Kuwaiti message

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Saturday discussed relations between Kuwait and Jordan in a meeting with Kuwaiti Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ali Ben Fahd Al Zamil, who conveyed to Mr. Kabariti a message from Kuwaiti Prime Minister Sheikh Saad Al Abdullah dealing with bilateral ties.

Cabinet approves accord with EU

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet on Saturday held an ordinary session, part of which was attended by His Majesty King Hussein. Minister of Information Marwan Muasher said after the session that the Cabinet approved the draft agreement of a European Union grant totalling \$125 million to support Jordan's reform programme and economy. The agreement was signed early this month in Amman.

Assad admits having entered secret accord with Israel in 1993

AMMAN (J.T.) — Syrian President Hafez Assad has admitted that his country had secured a secret agreement from Israel that the Jewish state would withdraw to the borders held as of June 4, 1967 in return for a peace agreement with Syria.

It was the first comment from President Assad on the reported U.S.-sponsored agreement, which was reached in July 1993, two months before the Palestinians and Israelis signed the Oslo accord.

President Assad made the admission in an interview with Cable News Network broadcast on Saturday. The interview was taped last week.

In the interview, conducted by Rowland Evans of CNN, President Assad said in reply to a question: "Those talks (with Israel) were not easy. They required a great effort from the Arab and Israeli parties and the United States. Progress was made and achievements accomplished which became commitments by the parties and right for them."

"Within the framework of those commitments, agreement was reached between Syria and Israel on Israeli withdrawal from the Golan up to the June 4, 1967 lands. After that we moved to complete discussions on



Hafez Assad

other elements of peace."

President Assad said the government of Benjamin Netanyahu, who defeated Shimon Peres in May elections, was ignoring the commitments and agreements already reached.

"If that is how he thinks, why should Syria want peace?" said President Assad. "If peace is not returning land to its owners, then why should we seek peace? Can any sensible man in the world expect Syria to make peace with the Israeli government while the Syrian territory remains occupied by the Israelis?"

He said the Israeli government, regrettably does not have a strategy for peace and the Israeli policy is

aimed at burying the peace through various means.

President Assad said that Israel should adhere to what its previous governments agreed to implement in order to reach a just and comprehensive peace in the region.

In reply to a question whether the stalemate of the peace process could lead to a war in the region, President Assad said that it was unnecessary to ignite a new war in the region but it could undermine stability in the whole Middle East and in turn might lead to a war at a later stage.

President Assad said the recent movement of the Syrian troops in Lebanon "does not mean any beligerent act against Israel and we have assured the American officials that we do not have any intention to launch any attack on Israel."

Reports say Syria had secured a secret agreement with Israel even before the Oslo accord between the Palestinians and the Jewish state had dismayed many in the region, with some of them asking how Damascus could accuse the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and then Jordan of breaking ranks with the Arabs to make what Syria said were "separate peace accords."

Royal Decree commutes death sentences passed on 'Arab Afghans' to life terms

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday commuted the death sentences passed on nine people convicted of terrorist attacks in 1994 in a case that had come to be known as the "Arab Afghan" affair.

The King's gesture, which came in the form of a Royal Decree that was reported by Justice Minister Abdul Karim Dughmi, follows a promise made by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to a member of Parliament early this year.

The clemency to turn the death sen-

tences into life terms in jail is also in line with the general Jordanian policy of limiting the capital punishment to people convicted of murders involving brutality and premeditation. Also no one convicted of political crimes has ever been executed in Jordan.

A total of 11 people were sentenced to death, seven were given stiff jail terms and seven were acquitted in the "Arab Afghan" case, which involved bombings and attempted bombings of cinema theatres showing pornographic films as well as on liquor stores. Nine people were injured in the bombings, including one of the bombers who lost the entire lower part of his

body.

Charges against the convicts included "plotting to destabilise the country and illegal possession of explosives." They were also found to have plotted to assassinate senior Jordanian officials and peace negotiators with Israel and to bomb nightclubs and video rental shops — symbols of Western culture that the defendants said they hated.

The defendants were nicknamed "Arab Afghans" because of the links of some of them had with the Afghan mujahedeen in fighting the 1980-90

(Continued on page 7)

Jordan gets invitation to MENA conference

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan on Saturday received an invitation to take part in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) economic conference which will be held in Cairo on Nov. 12-14. The invitation was delivered to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti by the Egyptian ambassador to Jordan.

(Continued on page 7)

Hamas calls on government to free 'Islamist and nationalist' activists

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Palestinian Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) Saturday called on the government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti to free all "Islamist and nationalist" activists which it said had been detained in Jordan.

"Hamas movement is pained to see that the Kabarti government continues to arrest Islamist and Nationalist activists" at a time when the Israeli occupation forces are attacking Palestinians and their holy shrines,

Ibrahim Ghosheh, the movement's spokesman, said in a statement.

"Hamas demands that the Kabarti government release all detainees," said the statement.

The statement, which was issued to condemn the reopening of a tunnel along Al Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied Jerusalem and to praise Palestinians who engaged the Israelis in violent confrontation in protest against the move, urged Mr. Kabarti to free particularly the director of "Muslim Palestine" magazine, Abdul Aziz Al Omari.

The London based Al Hayat daily Thursday quoted informed sources as saying that security forces arrested Mr. Omari in the regional office of the magazine in Amman and searched the office. The sources said the security forces demanded that those present in the office appear for investigation after confiscating their identity cards.

The Hamas statement also called on the Palestinian people to resort to armed resistance to liberate their land and urged mem-

(Continued on page 7)

Afghanistan's one-time vigilantes turn victors

ISLAMABAD (R) — The capture of Kabul on Friday by Afghanistan's Taliban militia crowns a series of stunning successes that has transformed a band of Islamic student vigilantes into overwhelming victors.

About two years after it was formed as a movement of theology students in the southern province of Kandahar, the Taliban has now proclaimed itself the new rulers of the war-shattered country.

As the warriors took over the ruined capital, they hanged a former president and his brother and proclaimed the complete enforcement of Islam on the country with death for adulterers and drinkers.

In some of the first measures enforced, the Taliban barred women workers from offices until further orders and asked them to wear the traditional Islamic "hejab" veil when outside their homes.

On Saturday the new Islamic government said it had hanged two more members of the former communist government and that its forces were pursuing retreating foes north of the capital Kabul.

The Taliban, which in Pashtu language means "seekers," or "students," burst on to the Afghan scene in October 1994 after it was founded by Mullah Muhammad Omar, a one-eyed former guerrilla fighter wounded several times in battles in the war against Soviet occupation in the 1980s.

Little is known of Mr. Omar, who, according to news reports, returned to religious studies after 1989 when the Soviet forces left Afghanistan. He is in his 30s.

Riding a wave of revolution against local warlords

and general weariness over the country's civil war, he and other religious students formed the Taliban and battled guerrilla commanders who had preyed on traders at checkpoints in the southern province of Kandahar.

Their ranks grew rapidly. Despite military setbacks in 1995, they proved more united and better disciplined than the faction-ridden government and rival guerrilla groups.

Few believed in 1994 that the group had the muscle to challenge the main factions hardened by years of guerrilla war against Soviet occupation.

Many of its recruits were said to be Afghan refugees attending Islamic madrassas, or schools, in Pakistan's border provinces of North West Frontier and Baluchistan, a factor that apparently led to suspicions that Pakistan backed the movement.

The suspicions increased in November 1994 when Taliban rescued a 30-truck trade caravan which Pakistan had sent to open a trade route to Central Asia but was blocked by a guerrilla group. The Taliban coupled this feat with the capture of the former royal capital of Kandahar.

President Burhanuddin Rabbani's government in Kabul openly accused Pakistan of aiding Taliban in September last year when the militia took the main western town of Herat, capital of the province of the same name bordering Iran.

This also raised fears in Shi'ite Muslim Iran of the rise of the Sunni Muslim Taliban in view of the traditional rivalry between Islam's two main sects.

Pakistan has repeatedly denied it is pro-Taliban,

saying it has no favourites among the Afghan factions.

The Taliban has remained a secretive organisation, revealing little of its structure or political ambitions. According to news reports out of Afghanistan, its fundamentalism has not always proven popular.

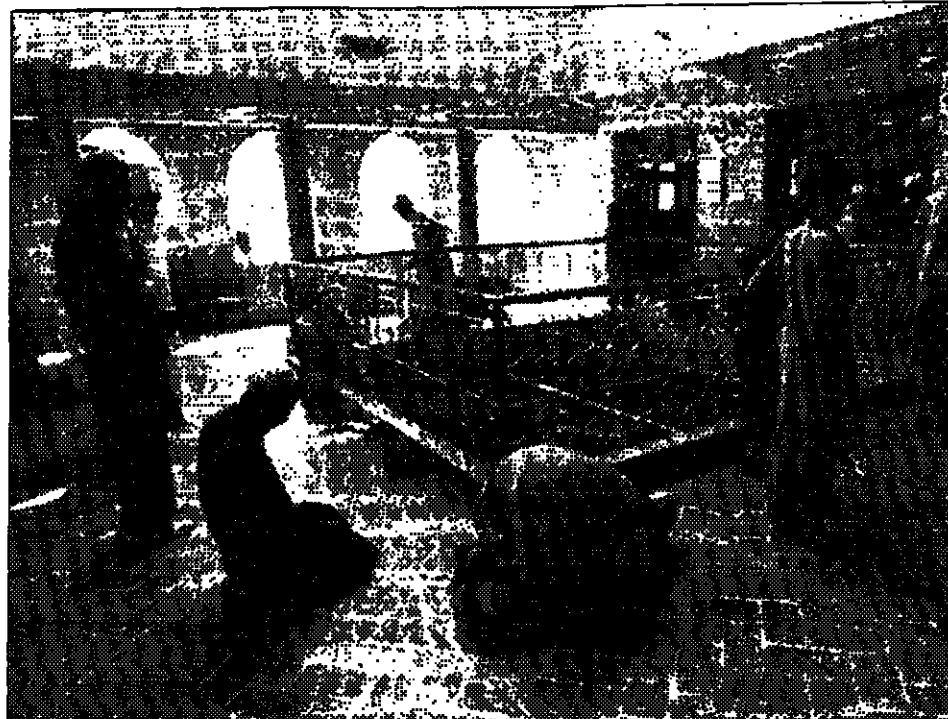
Banning television sets, closing girls' schools and forcing women to cover their faces, the movement has not always gone down well in areas under its control.

But for the most part, Taliban administration apparently has been relatively efficient, free of the corruption and interference common under other factions, and allowing modest commerce to be revived. How Afghanistan as a whole would thrive under Taliban rule is less certain.

A declaration issued by Mr. Omar and quoted by the Pakistan-based Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) news service named his deputy, Mullah Mohammad Rabbani (no relation of the Afghan president) to head the council.

According to Jane's Defence Weekly last year, the movement's central leadership, or shura, is composed of eight members, of whom Mr. Omar, Mohammad Rabbani, Borjan and Mohammad Abbas are the key players.

Mohammad Rabbani was named governor of the newly captured Nangarhar earlier this month. Little is known of the others, except most appear to share the background of being born in Kandahar, fighting the Soviet occupation and returning to their religious studies after the Soviet withdrawal in 1989.



Afghans and Pakistanis pray for the Taliban militia in a mosque in Peshawar in Pakistan on the border to Afghanistan after Kabul fell to Taliban early Friday (Reuters photo)

Kabul — a battered prize

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Along with strict Islamic rule, Taliban rebels have vowed to bring peace to Afghanistan. If they do, they will have succeeded where kings, emirs and dictators alike have failed.

With their stunning victory over government forces in the capital, Kabul, on Friday, the Taliban became the third regime in the last four years to claim to take power.

But even if the band of former religious-turned-guerrillas does oust President Burhanuddin Rabbani's coalition government for good, it will face its ultimate challenge yet: ruling Kabul and its war-weary residents.

In a chilling gesture of its style, one of the Taliban's first acts in Kabul was to execute former communist President Najibullah, whose communist regime was ousted in 1992.

While crowds of Afghans cheered the site of Najibullah's, dangling, body, apparently hopeful that the Taliban victory would end four years of factional fighting that destroyed their capital — the Taliban's two-year battle is not yet over.

The Taliban believe in imposing Islamic law by force and show little tolerance for more liberal interpretations of the Holy Koran.

Afghans, all but resigned to that country's seemingly endless conflict, have already endured the whims and decrees of Moscow-backed communists and a short-lived coalition of moderate and hardline Muslims.

Many in Kabul's diverse population of Persian-speakers, Hazaris and Uzbeks — some of whom have allied with Rabbani — were likely to resist the Taliban's brand of peace.

History was also not in the Taliban's favour. Nestled in the heart of West Asia, Afghanistan has for centuries been carved into ethnic divisions.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Kabul's emirs struggled to fight back Pathan tribesmen and Tajik rebels. In the 19th century, the country itself separated the British sub-continent from imperial Russia's last frontier.

More recently, King Zahir Shah was ousted in 1973 when his flagging economy triggered opposition from

ethnic groups accusing him of discrimination. While the country's Pathan population supported the king, others, including the Persian-linked people of western Herat province had little sympathy for his rule.

Later, Afghanistan served as a buffer between pro-Washington Pakistan and the Soviet central Asian republics. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, revolt began and an ensuing 14-year civil war.

Billions of dollars worth of arms flowed in from both sides. The Soviets withdrew their troops in 1989, but the communist regime of Najibullah lasted another three years before the coalition of rebel forces prevailed against their common enemy.

The aftermath left a divided but well-armed country and thousands of dedicated revolutionaries.

Former allies turned their guns on each other in a factional conflict that left more than 80 per cent of the capital in ruins, 30,000 civilians dead, and a mindset that power comes from the barrel of a gun.

The Taliban subscribe to such a mindset.

NEWS IN BRIEF

S. Arabia contracts U.S. for training

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon has told Congress that Saudi Arabia will purchase \$2.5 billion in contractor maintenance and training services to support the air defence and communications systems of the Royal Saudi Air Force, it announced. The services, last from June 1, 1997, through May 31, 2002, were announced in a statement issued at the Pentagon. "This sale will contribute to the foreign policy and national security of the United States by helping improve the security and defense of a friendly country," the statement said. The sale is geared to enhance the close working relations between U.S. forces and the Saudi military. "The maintenance and training technical services will not alter the basic military balance in the region, and there will be no adverse impact on U.S. defense readiness," the statement said. The principal contractors will be selected through competitive procurement procedures. The arrangement will require the assignment of 25 U.S. government employees and 300 contractors for the five-year period, the statement said.

Bahrain appoints shura council members

MANAMA (R) — Bahrain's emir Sheikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa on Saturday appointed 40 members for the consultative Shura council, the official Gulf news agency reported. Sheikh Isa earlier this month decreed a larger consultative council to widen popular representation, replacing a 30-member council the government appointed in 1992 mainly to give views on laws drafted by the cabinet. Officials said the new Shura council would open its first session on Tuesday. Demand for restoration of an elected assembly dissolved in 1975 was one reason for the outbreak in December 1994 of anti-government protests in Bahrain, the Gulf's main financial and banking centre.

2 beheaded in Saudi Arabia

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia on Saturday beheaded two Saudi men convicted of attempted rape. Saudi state-television reported. An Interior Ministry statement carried by the television said the two men "got drunk, broke into a house and attempted to rape its female owner at gunpoint." The beheadings in the capital Riyadh bring the number of people executed in the conservative kingdom this year to 35. Saudi Arabia strictly enforces Islamic law by beheading convicted murderers, drug smugglers, rapists and other criminals.

1 killed, 4 injured in Cyprus rally crash

NICOSIA (R) — One woman was killed and four people were injured when a car ploughed into a group of spectators at the 24th Rothmans Cyprus Rally late on Friday, police said on Saturday. Police said a 24-year-old woman was killed and four people were injured, two critically, when one of the cars taking part in the 950 kilometres run veered off a dirt track some 20 kilometres southwest of Nicosia and plunged into them. "It is the first time something like this has happened," said one of the rally organisers. The driver, Cypriot Marios Politas, dropped out of the event. The accident occurred a few hours after the rally, one of the major sporting events in Cyprus, started in the capital Nicosia. The rally is due to end on Sunday afternoon.

Pentagon reverses comments on 'experimental' Gulf war drug

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — The U.S. Defence Department said Friday it did not deliberately withhold information from U.S. troops in the 1991 Gulf war on an anti-nerve gas drug to keep Iraq from learning about U.S. Defences.

Almost completely reversing comments made at a Pentagon briefing on Thursday, it said the troops were not told the drug was being used on an investigational basis but said that information was not deliberately withheld from them.

"There was no effort to withhold information from

the troops," it said. "Information had been prepared to distribute to them, however, it did not arrive before hostilities were initiated."

Researchers are now studying whether the drug, pyridostigmine bromide (PB), in combination with insecticides or other chemicals in the Gulf war, might be one cause for illnesses thousands of veterans have suffered since.

"In retrospect, it was a mistake not to thoroughly inform the troops that PB was an investigational new drug or to brief them on the possible side effects," the statement

said. A Pentagon spokesman, Captain Michael Doubleday, had said at a news briefing on Thursday, "I believe there was a conscious decision made at the time not to tell the troops."

He said the reason was to keep information away from Iraq on U.S. preparations "to defend against certain kinds of chemical weapons."

The Food and Drug Administration gave the Defence Department a waiver allowing it to distribute the drug to troops without their consent. But it gave the waiver on condition they be told it was being used in

combat for the first time on an investigational basis and that they be told of possible side effects.

It said a small number of troops suffered side effects including nausea, cramps and headaches.

Even with the waiver, however, officials were required to warn troops about the risks of the drugs but did not, according to West Virginia Senator Jay Rockefeller, the ranking Democrat in the Veterans Affairs Committee.

A consumer group made the same complaint in January 1991 after the waiver was granted but its suit then was dismissed by a federal court

and the dismissal was upheld on appeal. All were widely reported at the time.

In a hearing on Wednesday, Mr. Rockefeller said recent Pentagon disclosures that U.S. troops in the Gulf may have been exposed to low levels of sarin nerve gas calls for a new approach to the study of the illness suffered by Gulf war veterans, including the side effects of vaccines such as pyridostigmine bromide. Capt. Doubleday, queried about Mr. Rockefeller's charges at a Pentagon briefing, said the military — in retrospect — should have been more forthcoming with the troops.

New appeal against Lebanon election results

BEIRUT (R) — An opposition candidate defeated in Lebanon's parliamentary polls has appealed against election results, alleging that Syria issued a ban on his reelection at the request of President Elias Hrawi.

Mikhael Al Daher, a Christian deputy defeated in north Lebanon, petitioned Lebanon's constitutional court before Saturday's deadline for appeals against the Aug. 28 election results.

Another nine losers — four Christians and five Muslims — have filed similar appeals, alleging vote-rigging and abuse by pro-

government candidates who crushed the opposition in all five rounds of voting. They asked the court to reject the results and declare them winners.

Mr. Daher said the "information and security service" — a codeword for Syria's intelligence service in Lebanon — pressured hundreds of key local electoral figures in Akkar district to support his rival Fawzi Hobeish. He said the pressure was imposed at Mr. Hrawi's request.

Mr. Daher was one of a handful of deputies who opposed a constitutional amendment last year

extending Mr. Hrawi's term by three years.

Mr. Daher cited in his appeal "flagrant interventions on the part of Lebanese civil and security officials" and said methods used against him and his supporters ranged between "verbal threats and detention of dozens for hours in cells under inhumane conditions."

The 10-member constitutional court, formed last year, gives first-time losing candidates the chance to appeal against the results. The court's decisions are final.

JORDAN TELEVISION

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PROGRAMME TWO
15:05 Fievels American Tails
15:30 Just The Job
15:45 Mac and Muley
16:00 Italian Soccer
17:00 News Flash
17:02 Sciences Cartoon
17:15 La Vie Devant Moi
17:30 Game Show Qui Est Qui
18:00 Magazine La Marche Du Siecle/Pan One
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine Sports Et Musique
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Cinema, Cinema, Cinema
20:00 American Chart Show
20:45 The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
21:10 Blackie's Magic
22:00 News in English
22:25 Dazzle (pt 1)
23:59 Short Story Cinema

PRAYER TIMES

04:07 Fajr
05:24 Sunrise/Duha
11:26 Dhuhur
14:51 Asr
17:29 Maghreb
18:46 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweifeh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel.
632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366
Anglican Church Tel. 652826
Armenian Catholic Church Tel.
771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.
775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Amman International Church
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Congregation Tel. 845457
The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932
Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691
The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295
English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

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NIGHT DUTY
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Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi 893542
Dr. Bahjat Bader 832642
Firas pharmacy 661912
Ferlows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055
Nairoukh pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
Najih pharmacy 847632
IRBID:
Dr. Mazin Abu Baldr 276852
Al Quds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Tareq Hijawi 985445
Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

WEATHER
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology:
Temperatures are expected to drop becoming below average by 2-3 degrees centigrade with winds northwesterly moderate to active. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate to active and seas calm.

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue

Agaba 22/33
Deserts 15/32
Jordan Valley 22/33
Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 31, Aqaba 36 Humidity
readings: Amman 25 per cent,
Aqaba 52 per cent.

AMMAN:
Civil Defence 630341
Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192 621111 637777
Fire Brigade 617101
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 896390
Public Security Dept. 630321
Hotel Complaints 605800
Price Complaints 661176
Water & Sewage Complaints 897467
Amman Municipality Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone
Repairs 623101
Abdali Tel. Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 773111
Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
J. Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Co. 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS
AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity 644281/6
Akileh Maternity 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity 644281/6
Akileh Maternity 642441/2
Jabal Amman Maternity 642362
Malhas, J. Amman 636140
Palestine, Shmeisani 607071
Shmeisani Hospital 669131
University Hospital 845845

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
Khalid Maternity 644281/6
Akileh Maternity 642441/2
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ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
08:30 Jeddah (RJ)
08:55 Larnaca (RJ)
09:05 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)
09:10 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
09:30 Beirut (RJ)
09:40 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
09:50 Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:00 Paris (RJ)
17:25 Chicago, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:45 Brussels, Paris (RJ)
18:15 London (RJ)
18:30 Athens (RJ)
19:25 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)
19:30 Rome (RJ)
22:45 Tunis (RJ)

Other Flights
04:45 Tel Aviv (LY)
11:30 Doha (QF)
12:40 Bahrain (GF)
13:30 Moscow (SU)
19:35 Cairo (MS)
20:10 Beirut (ME)
21:15 London, Beirut (BA)
22:20 Istanbul (TK)
22:30 Athens (OA)
23:20 Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
01:30 Belgrade (GU)

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FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by
Royal Jordanian (RJ) information
department at the Queen Alia International
Airport Tel. (08)53200-5,
where it should always be verified.
Information on other flights can be

supplied on phone (08)527700

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DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
09:50 Aqaba (RW)
19:45 Tel Aviv (RV)

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HRH Princess Basma, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Minister of Social Development Hamad Abu Jamous and other participants Saturday debate resolutions to a draft document on the status of women in the Arab World (Petra photo)

Ministers expected to endorse Arab women draft document today

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Ministers of social development from 18 Arab countries Saturday debated a unified draft document regarding the status of Arab women, and are expected to officially endorse it today.

The document focuses on issues of interest to Arab women, such as poverty reduction and increasing their high-level participation.

HRH Princess Basma, who officially opened the conference, said that technological advancement has had a negative impact on the status of Arab women, which, in turn, has adversely affected families and the general society.

"Women were the most vulnerable in recent social changes, and they suffered and endured burdens neither of their own making nor their participation, and they are stagnating in roles without partaking of the modern era," she said.

There are large numbers of illiterate Arab women, the Princess noted, adding that there is an urgent need to face poverty and unemployment which are on the increase with women as the most affected sector.

"I hope you examine the draft document with great interest and gravity, and follow its proposals when you implement the final copy because it reflects the end of a century and the beginning of a new one," Princess Basma told the participants.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, also participating, addressed the participants saying that he hopes they will form a document which will encourage women in professional capacities "to prove to the world that the future is ours and that the optimism we hold on to is real."

"Today's gathering is the connecting factor to

our respective nations and their enduring hope should compensate for what women have (historically) lost and suffered," Mr. Kabariti said.

Prepared by an assembly, working under the auspices of the Arab League, the document focuses on various regional and international developments of the past four decades and their impact on Arab women.

"The Arab nation is urged to reconsider past measures and methodically plan ahead in order to positively affect all Arabs and yet particularly women as they are the creators of life," Minister of Social Development Hamad Abu Jamous said in his opening speech.

Mr. Abu Jamous avowed that the time in which women were captives of tradition and culture should now end, and that women must be an active participants in the society in which they live.

"It is time for women to discard their [traditional] isolation which is neither compatible to our religions nor our century," Mr. Abu Jamous said.

Assistant Secretary General of the Economic Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Hazem Biblawi said Arab women have undergone many changes but that their appointment is not yet up to par.

There is a gap between the conception and the implementation of legislation related to women's rights, Dr. Biblawi stressed.

Poverty among women has increased, he added, and women's participation in decision-making is minimal.

"It is time to face the challenges which hinder women's development. We cannot do this with mere verbiage, but rather by deed," he asserted.

Assistant Secretary General of the Arab League Ahmad Kadrei Abdul

Majid delivered a speech on behalf of the Arab League Secretary General Ismat Abdul Majid, and asserted that there is every indication that Arab women have fought in order to participate in developing their respective societies.

In addition, he said, women's current responsibilities have doubled given the diverse burdens which pushed many men to emigrate, seek jobs abroad and leave their wives responsible for the family.

"This should prod everyone to work on providing guarantees of a proper environment for Arab women as well as every opportunity to participate in developing her future as well as the future of her society," Dr. Abdul Majid affirmed.

The ministers' meeting and final conclusions will facilitate the implementation of last year's Beijing Conference resolutions and will also formulate a unified Arab programme along with its suggested mechanism for implementation.

Also attending the conference are representatives from international organisations, including the Arab Labour Organisation, the Arab Family Organisation, The Arab Council for Childhood and Development, the Arab Women's Centre for Training and Research, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organisation, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organisation (WHO), and the United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The conference has been organised by the Ministry of Social Development, the Arab League General Secretariat, the Jordanian National Committee for Women, and ESCWA.

Minister reports decline in tourism, blames regional instability

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat Saturday reported a decline in tourism to the Kingdom, for which he faulted such factors as Israeli attacks in South Lebanon and continued instability in the Gulf region.

"Tourism in Jordan has been declining in the past six months and there are no signs pointing to improvement for the rest of the year, largely due to political developments in the Middle East," he said.

Addressing a conference directed toward tackling difficulties facing the tourism industry, held at the Forte Grand Hotel, Dr. Irsheidat continued to say "last year tourism brought \$700 million in revenues to the Kingdom and the indicators for the first three months of 1996 had shown

that this year would witness an even better performance with more revenues from the tourism industry than in past memory."

"But Israel's military campaign against south Lebanon in April and subsequent political changes in the Gulf region and the West Bank have sharply reduced hope for an increase in tourism this year," he added.

Dr. Irsheidat further stated that shifting policies and recent political events have negatively affected the tourism industry and not merely in Jordan but encompassing the entire region, which, he confirmed, engages in sharp competition amongst its nations in enticing foreign visitors.

"We must admit that the tourism industry is currently going through a crisis

due to political and military developments and we have begun to see the results of reservation cancellations by tourists who were slated to visit Jordan in the coming months," he added, further stating that "developments in the region compelled many tourists to cancel scheduled visits to Jordan while cancellations of such visits to Israel were estimated at 23 per cent."

Referring to Israeli-Jordanian cooperation in tourism, the minister said "agreements with the Israeli minister of tourism, during his recent visit to Jordan, stated that Jordan and Israel would create a joint committee to encourage Israeli tourists to stay in Jordan for more than one day as most of these tourists are used to returning the same day they arrive."

In order to overcome pre-

sent difficulties, he deemed necessary a closer coordination between tourist offices, transport and hotel price stabilisation and the adoption of more effective marketing policies abroad.

Vice President of Royal Jordanian (RJ) Majdi Sabri addressed the meeting stating that turbulence in the region prompted 2,333 tourists from the United States, 3,350 from Italy and 900 from France to cancel reservations for Jordan.

Dr. Sabri suggested that RJ, in conjunction with tourist offices, brainstorm plans to deal with the current situation and draw up an integrated plan for marketing Jordan's image abroad.

RJ President and Chief Executive Officer Nader Dahabi mentioned that RJ does offer incentives and various packages to visitors

to encourage their presence in the Kingdom.

He suggested Jordan follow the example of other countries in the region which have embarked on measures aimed to overcome the present crisis.

Chairman of the Jordan Hotels Association Michael Nazzari proposed that the government reduce entrance and departure fees to and from the Kingdom as an incentive for tourist visits.

Meeting participants presented diverse reports and agreed to set up a steering committee representing the public and private sectors in order to draw up recommendations for stimulating the tourism industry.

They will submit their conclusions to the Council of Ministers for approval.

'Food shortage stems from drought'

AMMAN (Petra) — Specialists warned Saturday that the Arab World will face a major water shortage with a deficit of 150 billion cubic metres by the end of the century up from 100 billion cubic metres at present.

In a workshop delegates from seven Arab countries, including Jordan, commenced discussions on the use of saline and brackish water for agricultural projects.

Director General of the Arab Centre for Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) Hassan Saoud stated at the opening session of the workshop "that insufficient water resources are, indeed, responsible for food shortages in the Arab region which imports an estimated 50 per cent of its consumables."

Noting that nearly 90 per cent of the Arab lands

are classified as dry or arid lands, Dr. Saoud said that the centre, with very good results, has been closely cooperating with Syria and Tunisia in the utilisation of brackish water for agricultural purposes.

Stressing the need for good management and rational utilisation of water resources, Dr. Saoud said that ACSAD will intensify efforts to aid Arab states in their search for additional water resources such as saline and brackish water and treated wastewater for farming purposes.

Ministry of Agriculture Secretary General Ghalib Abu Arrabi, who opened the workshop, declared that Jordan suffers from poor water resources and a deteriorating quality of available water, although the Ministry of Agricul-

ture was expending as much effort as possible to find non-traditional water resources.

This, he stated, is especially important for irrigation of agricultural lands which consume 70 per cent of Jordan's overall water resources.

Mr. Abu Arrabi maintained the Kingdom's continued cooperation with ACSAD and other regional and international organisations that they might better manage available water resources and locate alternative ones.

The 15 participants, who hail from Syria, Tunisia, Iraq, Libya, Algeria, Palestine and Egypt, are to present research conducted by their respective countries in the use of saline and brackish water for agricultural means.

15 arrested for alleged drug trafficking

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Public Security Department (PSD) Saturday announced the arrest of 15 people allegedly involved in drug trafficking operations and referred the suspects to court for due process.

Director of the PSD's Anti-Narcotics and Forgery Department Nazih Shreideh said that his department seized a total of 5.5 kilograms of heroin, 13.6 kilograms of hashish and 190,000 captagon pills, the total of which combine to an estimated street value of JD 1 million.

Colonel Shreideh stated that the suspects have been charged with 18 separate cases of drug trafficking but did not further elaborate upon their respective identities, except to say that there are some Jordanians involved.

The colonel maintained a recent decline in drug peddling cases largely due to

the stated arrest of a large number of traffickers in the past few months.

He affirmed that the majority of drugs seized by authorities were destined for other Arab countries.

Regarding the current cases, Col. Shreideh stated that a group of six suspects were held in connection with the attempted spiriting of 5.5 kilos of heroin into the Kingdom which were found in their possession.

He said that his department is equally invested in maintaining a strict surveillance at the borders as it is stemming illicit interior trafficking.

The colonel affirmed that Jordan has been used as a transit point for narcotics smuggled from Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Egypt and that, although the bulk is destined for the Gulf states, some of the drugs are locally consumed.

Newborn kidnapped; police offer reward

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police are offering a reward for information regarding a newborn kidnapped from the maternity ward of King Hussein Medical Centre on Sept. 22.

They have said that a veiled woman carrying a large bag is believed to have abducted the infant 12 hours after delivery.

The mother of the infant said the baby, a girl, was laying next to her when she was taken.

"I fed my child, changed her diapers, then I went to sleep and when I woke up I did not find her," Alia Khalid, 27, the mother of the new-born said.

She told the Jordan Times that two other patients who shared the ward stated that they saw a veiled woman linger in the room. "But both patients had left after the woman entered our ward."

According to Ms. Khalid, none of the patients knew the woman, and each thought that she was coming to visit someone else.

The distraught mother said the hospital staff were negligent and conditions were chaotic.

"I have just delivered a baby, and they should be taking care of me and my baby."

"What is tragic is that this is one of the biggest hospitals in Jordan but it is disorganised," she added.

When asked if she knew

of anyone who might want to cause her harm, Ms. Shreideh said her family has no enemies.

"I think the person who took my baby took it just because he or she wanted a baby," she said.

Police said they have formed an investigative committee and are looking for the perpetrator.

"I have only God to depend on," said Ms. Khalid, who also has a one-and-a-half year old child, said.

Police investigate death in Irbid

Meanwhile, police are investigating the death of a 45-year-old man in Irbid, according to the Public Security Department (PSD).

The PSD report said that the deceased's eldest son maintained hearing his brothers and sisters screaming from one of the rooms of the family's house. When he went to check on the situation, the report said, the son found his father in deteriorating condition.

The son rushed his father to Prince Rashid Ben Al Hassan Hospital, but the father was declared dead on arrival.

According to police, preliminary investigations indicated that the father was in debt, but are unclear as to whether or not this played a factor in his demise.



PRIME MINISTER RECEIVES BRITISH DELEGATION: Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Abdul Karim Kabariti Saturday receives a British College of Defence delegation. Mr. Kabariti reviewed regional issues with the delegation and the Middle East Peace Process as well as the latest developments in the West Bank (Petra photo)

WHAT'S GOING ON

LECTURES

* "The History of Mughal Art — Architecture, Miniatures, and Jewelry" by Nelly Lama at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 7:00 p.m.

* "The Economic Development in Syria: Present and Horizons" by Dr. Rizaqullah Hilan at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Works by Mohammad Al Jalous at Baladna Art Gallery, entitled "Fathet" at Gardens Street (Tel. 687598), until Oct. 3.

* Works by Shereen Odeh at the Jordan Plastic Art Association, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 623297), until Oct. 1.

* Basketry exhibition (with a variety of wrought iron furniture mixed with basketry) at Jordan Design and Trade Centre, Shmeisani (Tel. 699141/2), until Oct. 10.
* "Summer '96" exhibition at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (including ceramic sculptures by Vera Tammar, photographs of Jordanian villages by Ammar Khumash, works by contemporary Arab artists, a mosaic exhibition, and others), until Oct. 8.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Royal Family welcomes baby girl

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Friday welcomed a baby girl born to Their Royal Highnesses Prince Abdullah Ben Al Hussein and Princess Rania Al Abdullah at a special ceremony at the Royal Court. King Hussein named the newborn Iman.

Jordan takes steps to halt 'brain drain'

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan is expected to participate in the Executive Council of Arab Housing and Construction meetings due to start at the Arab League headquarters in Cairo Monday. The meetings will review the proposed unification of Arab codes to design and construct buildings as well as retaining engineers who hail from the Arab World to stymie 'brain drain'. Other issues to be discussed will include the United Nations Human Settlement Conference held in Istanbul last June.

Secretary General meets with PNA counterpart

AMMAN (Petra) — Secretary General of the Ministry of Education Dr. Izat Jaradat Saturday received the Director of the Vocational Education Department for the Palestinian National Authority George Ibrahim Ayed. The two sides debated possibilities for relation enhancements as well as exchanging ideas for the fields of training and vocational education. Dr. Jaradat stressed his ministry's readiness to provide his Palestinian counterpart with expertise in education.

S. Korean troops shoot dead another Northern fugitive

SEOUL (AFP) — South Korean troops Saturday shot dead another North Korean infiltrator fleeing from a beached submarine, as Pyongyang issued a fresh call for a peace treaty with Washington to replace the cold-war era armistice.

The infiltrator, trapped in an ambush in the area where the sub ran aground on Sept. 18, was the 21st killed and was identified as the vessel's deputy captain, Ryu Rim, a Defence Ministry spokesman said.

Ryu, 39, is believed to have acted as a guide for infiltrating agents.

"We heard footsteps on fallen leaves and waited for him to come close. We told him to freeze but he started running right away. We had to fire on him," a lieutenant told journalists.

Ryu, dressed in army fatigues and South Korean-made running shoes, was armed with an M-16 rifle bearing no identification number, a Canadian-made pistol and 200 rounds of ammunition.

His pockets were filled with acorns and other fruits bundled up in three layers of underwear.

The shooting brought to 21 the number of North Koreans killed since the North Korean submarine ran aground on the east coast, some 100 kilometres south of the demilitarised zone that separates the two Koreas.

Eleven were found shot dead, apparently by colleagues, and the remaining 10 were shot by South Korean troops.

One was captured and four others are believed to be still at large.

Four South Korean soldiers and one civilian have also died in a massive manhunt launched by the South and protested by Pyongyang.

The captured North Korean has been quoted by South Korean military officials as saying the sub ran aground after picking up agents off the eastern port of Kangnung.

The shooting came hours

after South Korea issued a fresh call to Pyongyang to accept a proposal for four-way talks to ease tensions on the Korean peninsula in the wake of the submarine infiltration.

In a speech to the U.N. General Assembly, South Korean Foreign Minister Gong Ro-Myung said official findings so far "present a strong possibility that last week's infiltration is a part of a larger scale operation."

Mr. Gong said the "brazen act of military provocation by North Korea constitutes not only a serious infringement of our territorial waters" but also a blatant violation of the 1953 armistice that ended the Korean War.

He urged North Korea to agree to the four-party talks involving both Koreas, China and the United States, a U.S.-South Korean offer which has been on the table since April.

The talks would lead to "constructive negotiations for the establishment of a lasting peace regime on the peninsula," Mr. Gong said.

He added that in the absence of a positive response from Pyongyang, "and given this serious incident of North Korea's violation of the armistice," South Korea believed that the armistice should remain "in full force."

But Pyongyang Saturday issued a fresh call for a peace treaty with Washington, which would bypass Seoul.

Pyongyang's official Korea Central News Agency (KCNA) quoted the North's ruling Workers Party organ, Rodong Sinmun, as saying no one could predict when the "outdated" armistice would collapse and "develop into war."

"It is necessary to establish a new peace mechanism at an early date in order to prevent armed conflict and war on the Korean peninsula," the newspaper editorial said.

In a separate dispatch, KCNA renewed a warning that the North could retaliate against the South for hunting down the submarine's survivors.



President Clinton greets astronaut Shannon Lucid at Ellington Field Friday. Clinton, in Houston for a campaign visit, joined the welcoming ceremony for Lucid's record-setting, six-month space flight. In the background is astronaut Tom Akers (Reuters photo).

Clinton blocks federal loans to deadbeat parents

HOUSTON (R) — President Bill Clinton, in the midst of a two-day campaign swing, Saturday issued an executive order aimed at denying federal loans to parents who fail to provide child support.

Mr. Clinton, who was to campaign in Rhode Island and Massachusetts later in the day, used his national radio address to announce steps to force better compliance with court-ordered child support payments.

"No area cries out for greater personal responsibility than the quiet crisis of child support," Mr. Clinton said. "No one should be able to escape responsibility for bringing a child into the world. It is our first and most fundamental duty."

He also announced creation of a streamlined computer system to track individuals who are entitled to federal payments but owe child support. The money — estimated by the Treasury Department at \$800 million — would be paid to cover the support payments.

Mr. Clinton, who has been stressing the kind of community involvement and responsibility advocated by his wife, Hillary, in her best-selling book *It Takes A Village*, said that since he became president other steps to crack down on deadbeat parents — primarily fathers — have increased collections by nearly 50 per cent.

"We have made a real difference, but we can do more and we must do more," Mr. Clinton said.

His executive order requires all federal agencies to take steps to deny federal loans — such as small business, farm and home loans — to individuals who do not meet their child support obligations.

"If you owe child support, you shouldn't get the support of the national government," Mr. Clinton said. "You can't make money off the taxpayers if you are refusing to support your family."

Although the federal government currently is withholding income tax refunds to offset child support debts, Mr. Clinton's action broadly expands the practice to other payments, including worker's compensation and military retirement and disability.

Mr. Clinton, who holds a solid lead over Republican rival Bob Dole in public opinion polls, planned to spend much of Saturday campaigning in Rhode Island and Massachusetts — two states he is considered to have locked up.

The president's visit was designed to help other Democratic candidates — particularly Sen. John Kerry, who is locked in a tight re-election contest with Republican challenger William Weld, the state's popular governor. On Friday, Mr. Clinton campaigned throughout Texas — a state last won by a

Democratic presidential candidate in 1976. Recent opinion polls, however, show the race there is a toss-up.

Mr. Clinton is expected to reduce his campaign schedule as the first presidential debate on Oct. 6 nears. Following the advice of his aides, he plans to rest and prepare for the nationally televised exchange.

Meanwhile, NASA Administrator Daniel Goldin said Friday in a casual conversation captured on NASA Television that Mr. Clinton had been better for the U.S. Space programme than predecessor George Bush.

Mr. Goldin, a former aerospace executive whom Mr. Bush appointed to his current post in March 1992, said Mr. Bush talked a better game than he played for the space programme.

"I told (Clinton) I joined the space programme because of John Kennedy and I'm staying because of him," Mr. Goldin told Johnson Space Centre Director George Abbey during a pause in a ceremony welcoming home astronauts from a space shuttle mission completed Thursday.

"Despite all the hits, I think he's done a better job for NASA than Mr. Bush. Mr. Bush said the right things, but never executed," Mr. Goldin said. Mr. Abbey's reply was inaudible.

NASA's budget has been cut by 30 per cent during the past two years, but funding for a controversial \$30 billion space station has remained largely intact during the Clinton administration.

Mr. Goldin also told Mr. Abbey "I liked what I said about him," referring to his introduction for Mr. Clinton at the ceremony to congratulate astronaut Shannon Lucid on her return from a record-breaking six-month stay on Russian space station Mir.

In the introduction, Mr. Goldin praised Mr. Clinton for "fighting every day for the space programme through countless votes, over and over again, but winning every one of them."

Mr. Clinton, on a campaign swing through Texas, praised Lucid's stay on Mir — the longest by a U.S. astronaut — as an "amazing, amazing achievement."

Lucid was ferried home by the shuttle Atlantis crew. After landing Thursday at Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, the astronaut flew Friday to Houston, where they were met at Ellington Field by Mr. Clinton and several hundred well-wishers.

Mr. Clinton, finished with his brief speech, had left the ceremony and was walking to his helicopter when Mr. Goldin and Mr. Abbey, awaiting his take-off, held their conversation near a microphone on the speakers' podium.

Tabloid finds Kennedy honeymoon hideout

MIAMI (R) — A US supermarket tabloid has published the first honeymoon pictures of John F. Kennedy Jr. And his bride Friday after tracking them down in Turkey. "We followed them on their honeymoon and got them in Istanbul, Turkey, and photographed them," said Tony Frost, editor of the Boca Raton, Florida-based *Globe*. In an issue bearing the screaming cover headlines, "JFK Jr.'s exotic honeymoon" and "Souvenir special exclusive wedding album," the paper promises "15 intimate photos" of Mr. Kennedy and Carolyn Bessette. Mr. Kennedy, once dubbed "the sexiest man alive" by *People* magazine, and Ms. Bessette had managed to elude the press when they secretly married on an island off Georgia last weekend. But Mr. Frost said a team of reporters from the *Globe* was able to secretly follow the couple to the eastern Mediterranean country and tracked them for three days as they saw the sights in the historic city. "The first we saw of John was Tuesday morning sitting on a chaise longue by the pool. He was wearing black swimming trunks," Mr. Frost said. He said Kennedy was reading a newspaper and laughing at reports the couple were on a yacht off the U.S. east coast. He said he instructed his crew to follow them at a distance, but not to disturb their honeymoon. Mr. Frost said Mr. Kennedy seemed resigned when he spotted a *Globe* photographer, grabbing his wife's hand and kissing it in an echo of their wedding photo. "He was very sporting about it," he said.

Maid jailed for sexually abusing child

HONG KONG (AFP) — A Filipina maid was sentenced to three months in jail for sexually abusing her employer's five-year-old daughter, Marilyn Sibal, 25, was convicted on two counts of indecently assaulting the child while helping her to take a bath, the court was told. Eastern magistrate Abu Wahab imposed the jail term Friday, citing Ms. Sibal's "battered" state as a result of the abuse. The maid, who was arrested in January after the child's mother became suspicious of child abuse, had not been charged with any other offences. Judge Abu Wahab told the convicted woman: "You were put into a position of trust. Part of your duty was to look after the child." Ms. Sibal's lawyer, Giles Surman, said she would lodge an appeal. The maid, who arrived in Hong Kong last August, was arrested in January after the child's mother became suspicious of child abuse.

Indian soldiers arrested for rape

NEW DELHI (AFP) — Two Indian soldiers were arrested at a railway station in the central city of Sagar, accused of raping a woman who later died, the United News of India (UNI) said Saturday. The soldiers allegedly took the woman into a temporary army camp at the railway station and raped her Thursday, UNI said. She died after she was taken to hospital by police. Police said some 50 army personnel went to the local police station to demand the release of the two men but were turned away.

Key police officer in Murtaza Bhutto's case commits suicide

KARACHI (AFP) — The investigation into Murtaza Bhutto's death took another twist Saturday as a key policeman accused of faking his injuries during the shootout in which Murtaza died, committed suicide.

Senior police officials said Haq Nawaz Sial, 55, the head officer of the Clifton Police Station committed suicide with a single shot to his temple early Saturday, after a medical board said his injuries were "self-inflicted."

A police statement said Sial, who had been suspended last week, shot himself with his service revolver which was found clutched in his hand.

However, Sial's wife disputed the police verdict of suicide, and said she saw two masked men fleeing over the wall of their house moments after she heard the fatal gunshot.

Senior police officials dismissed Sial's wife's claims, saying she was "trying to cover up" the suicide.

Police guards posted at Sial's house since Bhutto's death "obviated chances of outside interference," the police statement said.

Murtaza Bhutto, the estranged brother of Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, died along with six of his colleagues on Sept. 20 after a shootout with police near his Clifton residence, in the city's elite southern district, according to the police.

But Murtaza's supporters who survived the shooting incident said the police opened fire without provocation. His widow Ghinva has asked the provincial Sindh High Court to register a case against senior police officers for murder.

The shooting incident took place within Sial's Clifton jurisdiction, but Ghinva has also accused senior police officials, including city Police Chief Shoaib Suddle and Southern District Police Chief Wajid Durrani of involvement.

Newspapers reported Saturday that Chief Durrani had been transferred but this could not be independently confirmed. Chief Durrani was the senior officer in charge when Murtaza was shot.

Two policemen, including Sial, said they were injured in the shootout, but a medical board, convened by the Sindh health secretary at Ghinva's request, ruled Thursday that Sial's injuries were "self-inflicted."

A six-member medical board, comprising doctors and forensic experts, meeting here Thursday examined Sial and declared that his left foot injury had been caused by a firearm at close range and was "self-inflicted."

The board avoided saying "self-inflicted" because the nature of the wound indicated that someone else fired

the shot with Sial's consent.

Sial returned to his home from the hospital in a police residential area and committed suicide a day after the medical board report was announced, police said.

"The man had no need to kill himself. He got too depressed," a senior police official investigating the case told AFP.

"He repeatedly said that the medical report had ruined his 35-year police career," another police official said.

Ghinva had named Sial amongst several other police officers as responsible for the shooting. She also petitioned the Sindh High Court to instruct Sial and the government to register a formal case against the police.

The registration of a formal complaint with police, known as the "first information report" is a crucial part of the judicial process in Pakistan.

Ghinva, in her petition, maintained that Sial, in his capacity as the head officer in the Clifton area, had refused to register the case at her request.

Another police officer, Shahid Hayat, who was injured in the left thigh in the Sept. 20 shooting incident is also to face the medical board to ascertain the nature of his injuries over the next few days.

Australia mourns landslide deaths

PERTH, Australia (R) — School holidays began grimly in tiny communities of the Cowaramup Region of Western Australia Saturday as locals prepared funerals for nine people killed in a rockfall during a beach outing.

The nine, five adults and four children, were buried alive when a cliff collapsed on them as they watched a surfing contest 200 kilometres southwest of Perth Friday.

"It's pretty weird, scary, and sad. Everyone's confused," an unidentified school girl at the scene of the tragedy told Australian Broadcasting Corp (ABC) radio. "It hasn't sunk in yet," she said.

The dead children, from two local schools, were aged 11 to 13. One girl suffered minor injuries and was recovering in hospital but her mother was one of those killed.

The group of about 20 children, teachers and other adults had been celebrating the end of the school term at a popular surfing beach when the 10-metre cliff collapsed.

The alarm was first raised by a 12-year-old student surfer paddling in to shore who saw the rock face collapse.

Police spokeswoman Jill Willoughby said the town of Margaret River, where four of the victims had lived, had been deeply affected by the tragedy.

"Just about everybody in the town knows one of the victims or a grandparent or a parent of a victim," she said.

"It is a pretty emotional time for everyone. Everyone is hanging on everyone's shoulders," she said from the town.

A fire and rescue services spokeswoman said chaplains also had been sent to the communities, normally quiet holiday spots, to counsel residents and rescue workers.

The Education Department had also sent a team of psychologists to the area.

"Of course, I am particularly concerned for the very large number of children that have been affected," said Cheryl Vardon, director general of the department.

The sparsely populated region is known for its world class surfing beaches and its premier wines.

Police and emergency services officials Saturday collected personal property and were expected to blast away the remaining limestone cliff overhang.

New Japanese party launched ahead of next month's elections

TOKYO (AFP) — Dozens of disenchanted lawmakers from Japan's ruling coalition launched a new party Saturday with immense popular appeal but an unclear political orientation.

The new Democratic Party grouped 57 lawmakers, most of whom held seats in the lower house which was dissolved overnight ahead of elections to be held on Oct. 20.

Most of the defectors were from the Social Democratic Party and the centrist New Party Sakigake, two junior parties which joined forces with Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in a 27-month coalition government.

"Let us strive together to bring Japan out of a stalemate into a society benefiting citizens," said Health and Welfare Minister Naoto Kan, who was chosen to chair the Democratic Party with Yukio Hatoyama, a former Sakigake secretary general.

Recent polls have indicated that as many as half the Japanese electorate are undecided about who to vote for, with the Democratic Party widely seen as likely to become the third force in the political spectrum picking up as many votes as the main opposition New Frontier Party (NFP).

The new party has endorsed some 120 candidates to stand for election to the 500-seat House of Councillors, the lower house, in which the LDP held 206 seats and the NFP 163.

While the conservative LDP is likely to remain the biggest party in the new lower house, many political analysts doubt it can win an outright majority, meaning that the

new party could hold the swing vote.

The Social Democratic Party is not seen as a major threat after its strength in the lower house fell from 63 to 35 seats due to defections to the Democratic Party.

Its popularity has also sagged because of constant compromising of its leftwing policies to keep in step with the other members of the ruling coalition.

As an indication of this the new party has barred Social Democratic leader and former Premier Tomichi Murayama and Sakigake founder and former Finance Minister Masayoshi Takemura from joining. Saying both have compromised too much to the LDP.

The mass-circulation newspaper Yomiuri said the new party wanted to form a government as a coalition partner but it was unclear if it would tie up with the LDP or the NFP.

The NFP, led by LDP defectors, was the nucleus of the alliance which ruled Japan for a year after the LDP lost its near four-decade grip on power in 1993 elections.

Mr. Kan, who is popular with many voters for his zeal in uncovering a scandal involving the Health Ministry, the pharmaceutical industry and hospitals, said in a television interview Saturday the party was not interested in taking power just for the sake of it.

"It is possible to submit legislation as an opposition party," he said.

Mr. Hatoyama has been joined by his younger brother Kunio, who left the NFP, and former Socialist Party Chairman Sadao Yamahana and Takahiro Yokomichi, a former governor of Hokkaido prefecture.



Burmese policemen enter a hotel where newsmen gathered after they ordered them not to take picture of soldiers near the road that access the house of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi Saturday (Reuters photo)

Protests pour in after Burma democracy detentions

RANGOON (R) — Condemnation of Burma's military rulers poured in from around the world Saturday as troops blocked streets around Aung San Suu Kyi's house for the second day to prevent a meeting of democracy activists.

Foreign governments and human rights groups called on the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to stop its repressive tactics and demanded the immediate release of 109 activists who have been detained by the military government in a bid to prevent the meeting.

U.S. State Department deputy spokesman Glyn Davies said in Washington Friday that the SLORC's actions prevented Ms. Suu Kyi and her party from exercising their basic political rights.

He urged the SLORC "to immediately, and uncondi-

tionally, release all of the NLD (National League for Democracy) members and activists who have been detained for exercising their legitimate political rights."

On Friday Burma accused the United States of helping Ms. Suu Kyi plan the party meeting, an accusation a U.S. government official dismissed as "ridiculous."

Britain called it a clear obstruction of a legal political party and said it was consulting with its European Union partners against possible measures against Rangoon.

Human rights groups also condemned Burma's actions. "Yet again the military authorities are showing that they will not tolerate any dissenting voices in Myanmar (Burma)," Amnesty International said in a statement.

A Burmese government

official said the SLORC stopped the meeting because it was aimed at disrupting national stability.

The NLD said the meeting was to mark the eighth anniversary of its founding. The NLD was born in 1988 when unprecedented protests against military rule had left thousands dead or in jail. The party won a landslide victory in a 1990 general election which was never recognised by SLORC.

Security police toting machine guns and other officers manned checkpoints on the road leading to Ms. Suu Kyi's University Avenue house Saturday for the second day to prevent anyone from coming or going.

They said the section of University Avenue "would be off limits until Sunday, when the NLD congress was originally scheduled to end.

The barricades also meant Ms. Suu Kyi could not deliver her usual Saturday and Sunday speeches to supporters outside her house.

Police temporarily detained some foreign photographers and cameramen in their hotel Saturday, ordering them to hand over film and tapes of the troops manning the checkpoints.

The All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABPDF), a group of Burmese exiles, said in a statement it was worried about Ms. Suu Kyi's safety.

The 1991 Nobel Peace laureate has been seen but not heard Saturday. Witnesses said they saw her walk down University Avenue, but no one has heard from her since Friday.

Repeated efforts to reach Ms. Suu Kyi by telephone failed, leaving to speculation her line might have been cut.

Tigers blast telecom tower as Sri Lanka fighting escalates

COLOMBO (AFP) — Tamil rebels blew up a telecommunications tower in their final major bastion in northern Sri Lanka, as some 20,000 government troops closed in during fierce fighting, officials here said Saturday.

The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) destroyed the tower Friday after their major counter-offensive failed to stop the army advance on Kilinochchi, the only major town still under Tiger control, the Defence Ministry said.

The move signals the imminent withdrawal of the guerrillas from the town, leaving no useful assets behind, officials said.

The army had advanced another 500 meters into rebel territory Friday, they said.

Twenty-one army soldiers were killed in Friday's fighting and another 46 wounded, while the guerrilla losses

drive begun on Sept. 22.

Military spokesman Sarath Munasinghe declined to say if the army was moving to take Kilinochchi, "our aim is to draw out the terrorists and kill as many as possible."

"We are achieving that already," he added.

Military officials said blasting of the telecommunications tower was reminiscent of the Tigers' blowing up of a similar tower at the northern town of Jaffna just before they pulled out of the area in December.

The Tigers had maintained Jaffna as the capital of a de facto state run by them for five years till they were dislodged by a series of military operations begun in October last year.

Since then, the Tigers had relocated their main political base at Kilinochchi, the only main town still under rebel control in the island's north-east where Sri Lan-

ka's Tamil minority of two million is concentrated.

However, the fall of Kilinochchi will not end the war, because Tigers will still be able to keep up their guerrilla operations.

"This is now becoming a prestige battle for the Tigers," a defence analyst said. "If they lose Kilinochchi, the Tigers will lose their grip on the Tamil population."

The army drive launched Sunday appeared to be headed to encircle Kilinochchi, which is just six kilometres south of the army lines at the small town of Paranthan.

The LTTE's clandestine radio station Saturday reported the deaths of 26 civilians in aerial attacks carried out by the security forces but made no reference to their failed counter-offensive in the Kilinochchi area.

Lebed wins support for Chechen peace plan

NAZRAN, Russia (R) — Russian Security Chief Alexander Lebed won support Friday from north Caucasus local leaders for a deal that has halted the Chechen war but raised concern in Moscow that it amounts to capitulation to the rebels.

All of the regional leaders at the conference in Ingushetia, a region bordering on Chechnya, approved the plan signed by Gen. Lebed and separatist Chief of Staff Aslan Maskhadov on Aug. 31.

"We gathered here in Nazran to discuss the agreements signed by Alexander Lebed, to give them greater legitimacy and to discuss how we can move further," Aslan Dzharimov, president of the ethnic Republic of Adyghe, told Reuters.

"The time has come when we must stand back from ambitions. Yes, there is a legal

problem but everything that stops bloody war, stops human casualties, must be welcomed," he said.

The deal, which ended 21 months of fighting in the region, followed a series of humiliating defeats for Russian troops. It postponed a decision on Chechnya's future political status by five years and called for Russian troop withdrawals.

The separatists say the deferral was meant to give Russia a face-saving chance to let Chechnya go rather than to give them time to change their minds.

The deal received a mixed reaction in Moscow, where many politicians said it amounted to capitulation by Russia and could encourage separatism in other parts of the country, notably elsewhere in the North Caucasus. Russia's constitution does not allow regions to secede.

But participants at the meeting in Nazran were unanimous in backing the peace plan. They also called for a congress of North Caucasus peoples to be held in mid-November to take decisions on ensuring peace in Chechnya elsewhere in the region.

Gen. Lebed, secretary of Russia's policy-making Security Council and President Boris Yeltsin's personal representative to Chechnya, told the meeting a coalition government for Chechnya would be discussed in Moscow with Chechen representatives.

He said this government should be formed before the planned congress of North Caucasus peoples. A Chechen rebel delegation is due to visit Moscow from Oct. 1 to 5.

of the self-proclaimed Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, discussed the fate of pro-Moscow Chechen Leader Doku Zavgayev.

"For us the question of Doku Zavgayev does not exist. This is Moscow's problem," Mr. Abumuslimov told Reuters.

But Dagestani leader Magomedali Magomedov said: "Even if the interests of three per cent of the population of the republic, are not compatible with the majority, they still have to be taken into account."

Mr. Abumuslimov said three conditions had to be met for the peace process to advance — withdrawal of Russian troops from Chechnya, free elections and free determination by the people of Chechnya's status. "The way troops are being withdrawn now does not satisfy us," he said.

No NATO enlargement before accord with Russia — Yeltsin

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin said Saturday NATO must sign an accord with Russia before there is any enlargement of the Western alliance, a Kremlin statement said.

Russian Defence Minister Igor Rodionov briefed Mr. Yeltsin Saturday on his recent talks with NATO officials in Bergen, Norway, and Mr. Yeltsin said NATO wanted to enlarge first and later sign an accord with Russia.

"That is not on. First, an accord with Russia and later a solution of the issue of NATO enlargement, and not the other way round," Mr. Yeltsin said.

A brief clip of the Rodionov-Yeltsin meeting at the Central Clinical Hospital, where Mr. Yeltsin is undergoing pre-operative tests, was shown on Russian ORT public television.

Previously Mr. Yeltsin has strongly opposed any NATO enlargement, warning that it could cause a new cold war-type split in Europe, or even trigger a war.

Mr. Rodionov made it clear to NATO's 16 defence ministers in Bergen Thursday that Russia was interested in continuing cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in Bosnia and other areas regardless of NATO plans to expand eastward to embrace Moscow's former Soviet bloc allies.

U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry has said the alliance will identify several countries for membership at a summit next year, and insisted that NATO's openness to new members is a principle that must not be abandoned.

He has said the three ex-Soviet Baltic Republics — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — are "not yet" ready for NATO membership.

In Helsinki a week ago Mr. Perry said

NATO would seek a charter with Russia that would formally give Moscow a voice, but not a vote, in the alliance's deliberations on nuclear weapons, the basing of troops and other highly sensitive issues.

Mr. Perry said NATO was not prepared to make any ironclad commitments to Russia not to base nuclear weapons near its border as NATO expanded to include former Soviet bloc countries.

"But there was a very strong consensus within the alliance on the need for a formal charter with Moscow that would allow it to participate in and influence alliance deliberations," he said.

Mr. Rodionov Thursday reiterated Moscow's opposition to NATO enlargement, saying even Western officials recognised that Russia no longer posed a threat to the West and so there was "no strategic necessity" to justify expansion.

"Despite all attempts to justify NATO expansion, our public opposes this idea," Mr. Rodionov said. "We may support this idea when we are convinced that NATO passes through the transformation that the new situation requires."

The date and venue for the key NATO summit next year have not yet been announced, and Mr. Perry did not name the countries that could be invited to join the alliance, but Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary are often cited as likely candidates.

Russian National security chief Alexander Lebed is to visit the NATO headquarters in Brussels on Oct. 6-9 to discuss the alliance's enlargement plans.

U.S. proposals for broad Russian participation in NATO activities will be laid out during a visit to Moscow by Mr. Perry next month and a reciprocal visit to Washington in December by Mr. Rodionov.

Suharto says 3 parties are enough

JAKARTA (R) — Indonesian President Suharto has dismissed calls to allow more political parties to contest the country's general elections, the Jakarta Post newspaper reported Saturday.

"It would be impossible to add another party," Mr. Suharto told university students in a meeting Friday.

Indonesia allows only the ruling Golkar Party, Muslim-orientated United Development Party (PPP) and Christian-nationalist Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI) to contest tightly-controlled general elections held every

five years. Mr. Suharto said the current system had evolved over 20 years in a long and painful process of consensus-building.

"Those who insist on a multiparty system similar to what they have abroad, or the one we had a long time ago, are automatically asking that we repeal the five political laws that we enacted by consensus. This will be a setback," he said.

"This is clearly unrealistic if we look at the history of this country in the last 20 years and at the way we have

upheld the law and implemented the (state) Pancasila ideology and the 1945 constitution," Mr. Suharto said.

The political laws limit the number of organisations which can contest the elections to three, regulate election campaigns and the number of seats in parliament and require that all social and political organisations adhere to Pancasila.

"This system has ensured six stable administrations, each one governing for five uninterrupted years," Mr. Suharto said.

4 released, 6 detained in Belgian sex horror

BRUSSELS (R) — Magistrates released four people but kept the six key suspects in jail Friday in Belgium's horrific child kidnapping, rape, murder and car theft scandal.

Chief suspect Marc Dutroux, his second wife Michelle Martin, and associates Michel Lefevre, Michael Diakostavrianos, Jean-Michel Nihoul and Annie Boutry remain in jail.

But the court, which must decide each month whether imprisonment remains necessary before trial, opted to release chief police detective Georges Zicot, alleged car theft scam companion Gerard Pinon, Dutroux associate Claude Thirault and Nihoul's latest girlfriend Marleen De Cockere.

The charges against the four, ranging from car theft to fraud and drugs trafficking, remain in place.

Two others — insurance agent Thierry Dehaan and scrap metal dealer Pierre Roschow — have already been conditionally released, although the charges remain.

The affair has already turned up the bodies of four abducted young girls and that of Dutroux associate Bernard Weinstein, re-visualised the search for at least seven other missing Belgian children and propelled the world into action.

Hundreds of pornographic video tapes have been seized, some featuring Mr. Dutroux, and secret holding cells for the children have been found in some of the six houses the jobless father of three and convicted rapist owned.

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Sunday's Economic Pulse

Ministry of Supply — to be or not to be, anymore?

By Dr. Fahed Fanek

IT IS premature to talk about dismantling the Ministry of Supply. It has already stockpiled huge amounts of wheat and other cereals which are sufficient to meet all Jordan's needs for almost a year.

On the other hand, the present transitional period needs the presence of the Ministry of Supply until there is no more need to set prices for certain basic commodities imported or subsidised by the government, such as bread. This should wait until the private sector takes over the responsibility of importing wheat, rice, sugar and milk and starts selling these goods at the current market prices which are lower than the prices charged by the Ministry of Supply in the free market until this date.

However, one should acknowledge the fact that the Ministry of Supply failed to achieve the objective for which it was established, and reached a dead street. It was proved beyond doubt that the policy of administrative pricing could not succeed. Prices under such a system moved only in one direction: upwards. It is in the best interest of consumers and producers alike to leave prices to be determined by market forces, in accordance with the prevailing prices in the global market.

Taking stock of the actual results of having a Ministry of

Supply functioning forcefully in the market place, we find that Jordan did not only continue to pay the international prices of imported consumer goods, it also paid a price difference resulting from the inevitable governmental routine of purchasing. The Kingdom also incurred unnecessary general and administrative expenses to run the operation, that is over and above waste and corruption as shown by many cases referred to the courts, while before the introduction of the Ministry of Supply, in mid-seventies, and due to strong competition among retailers, the margin was so thin that those retailers used not to make money on selling rice and sugar except for the empty sack which was worth 50 fils at the time.

Jordan lived without a Ministry of Supply until 1975. The country can live without it after 1997. The period between these two dates, during which the markets were under the hegemony of the Ministry of Supply, was a period of high inflation, waste, corruption, distortion and accelerating prices, i.e., exactly the opposite of what the ministry was mandated to achieve.

Naturally the Ministry of Supply could not protect consumers from internationally rising prices. It was obliged to revise the price of commodities from time to time to cope

with the continued escalation of prices globally. However, the ministry prevented consumers from benefiting from any decrease in prices. This was the case with sugar and rice, which the ministry continued for a long-time to sell at the previously fixed prices, despite the substantial decline of their prices worldwide. The ministry was thus able to make tens of millions of dinars in so-called profit, at the expense of the consumers. The ministry used its monopolistic profits to subsidise other commodities and encourage waste and distortions.

Destruction is easy while building is difficult. The ill-advised decision to establish a Ministry of Supply in 1975 was easy. The ministry appeared overnight. The day after we were blessed with a full-fledged ministry, complete with a minister, an under-secretary, along with an army of inspectors and staff.

By contrast, the right decision to dismantle the ministry is not that easy. It needs a transitional period wherein the functions of the ministry should be frozen one after another so that, finally, the disappearance of the ministry comes as a foregone conclusion, with no consequences and without a shock in the market.

Peace through partnership

WE SHOULD be taken of a comment made by former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in the wake of the eruption of violent clashes between the Palestinians and Israelis. In it Peres dismissed as shortsighted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's claim that he could attain peace and security for his country without making any territorial concessions to the Arab side. The Israelis, in particular, should reflect on the statement since at their prime minister has done in his 100 days in office is that he deceived himself and his constituency in the sense that the peace process without due consideration for the land-for-peace formula which the previous administration has approved and proceeded along as the basis of peace agreements with the Arabs. Surely the Israeli people now understand that the platform which Netanyahu's Likud-led government has adopted so far seeks peace in return for peace, a plank that will not go far in advancing the cause of reconciliation and stability in the Middle East.

The events of the last several days have proved Netanyahu and his programme wrong. Israel is further away today from peace and security than it has been since before the Oslo accords were signed. Simply put, Israel would be indulging in self-delusion if it ever convinces itself that it can achieve peace and security without giving up the territories it has occupied since 1967 and afforded Palestinians the right to self-determination. The only way Israel can attain its double objective of peace and security is to negotiate with the Arab side on the basis of international legitimacy and implement those agreements already reached with the Palestinians. Neither Israeli tanks nor Cobra helicopter gunships can provide Israel with the security or peace that it needs. Such actions as storming Al Aqsa Mosque and shooting with the ammunition at Palestinian worshippers and demonstrators show that the Netanyahu government still seeks peace with domination rather than with accommodation in Palestine. This myopic policy is bound to lead the whole region into turmoil and more bloodshed, not to mention the complete derailment of the peace process. It should be viewed, changed and even reversed if we are to walk the extra mile towards comprehensive, just and lasting peace.

This is a time for wisdom and a coolheaded examination of what went wrong not only on the Palestinian track but also on the Syrian and Lebanese fronts. Peace in the Middle East cannot be imposed, nor can it be achieved piecemeal. All the unrest and bloodshed of the past five days would not be in vain if Israel under its new regime took a second look at its tactics, even strategy, for regional peace in light of what happened. It would not be construed as weakness if the wrong policies were reviewed and corrected, especially by the other side which itself went into negotiations weak, vulnerable and divided. The U.N. Security Council has become seized with the situation in the West Bank. The Arab League has convened an emergency meeting over the recent confrontations. Several Arab leaders, including His Majesty King Hussein, have been preoccupied with the deteriorating situation across the Jordan River. Major capitals have appealed for restraint and the pursuit of peace with a renewed vigour. It is up to Netanyahu to steer his country back into the course of peace even if there are elements within his cabinet who would rather see the demise of the process than meet the Palestinians and the Arabs half-way on the road to peace, reconciliation and lasting stability.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I Arabic daily voiced Jordan's deep concern over the serious developments in the occupied Arab lands and Jerusalem, saying the recent events indicate the grave danger is posed to the holy shrines revered by hundreds of millions of Muslim people around the world. The violations of the sanctity of Al Aqsa Mosque compound by the Israelis reflect the Jewish state's open defiance of the feelings of Arabs and Muslims and expose Israel's disregard to international laws and various U.N. resolutions concerning the occupied Arab lands, said the paper. It is because Jordan believes that the Holy City must remain open to the followers of all three monotheistic faiths that King Hussein has demanded the creation of an international committee to look into the consequences of the recent Israeli measures around the holy sites and pave the way for the restoration of calm and peace in the city, said the paper. Jordan has openly condemned the Israeli's opening of the tunnel under Al Aqsa Mosque because it endangers the holy place, and the Palestinians have risen in anger upon witnessing their holy places desecrated, continued the daily. It said that the reactions should be heeded by the world community which should take immediate action towards ending Israel's illegal actions and ensure the continuation of the peace process in our region.

The dark triumph of the middle managers of genocide

By Ed Vulliamy

ALMOST FOUR years ago, a television reporter and I stumbled into a place that bewildered and outraged the world. Omarska was a concentration camp in northwestern Bosnia, run by Serbs and dedicated to the humiliation and murder of Bosnian Muslims and Croats. It seemed unbelievable that a network of such camps — with their echo of the Third Reich — could have existed in the heart of Europe, hidden from view for three months while thousands were slaughtered and those who remained were kept skeletal, bloodied by torture and living in abject, desolate terror.

Now, with Bosnia's guns at least temporarily silenced, comes the bitter reckoning. On May 7, 1996, one of Omarska's most notorious guards, the alleged torturer and killer Dusko Tadic, took his place in the dock: at the war-crimes tribunal in The Hague, standing where no man has stood since Goering and Hess, charged with crimes against humanity (I am obliged to testify at the trial as a witness for the prosecution). But the reckoning is more than a judicial matter. It is an attempt to try to understand the most ferocious carnage to blight Europe in fifty years. To understand the war, I had to return to the iron-ore mine that housed the accused concentration camp.

In 1992 it took five putrid summer days to argue our way into the camp. But now the road is empty at the turnoff for Omarska. Flakes of snow, which mute all sound and drape the mine in virgin white, have overlaid what happened here. It is seven below zero, but our shivers are not from the cold. Children play with sleds in the yard behind the gate. A couple of stray mongrels now frolic in and out of the jaws of a hydraulic door.

In 1992 this tarmac was a killing yard, the bodies loaded onto trucks by bulldozer. Omarska was a place where cruelty and mass murder had become a form of recreation. The guards were often drunk and singing while they tortured. A prisoner called Fikret Harambasic was castrated by one of his fellow inmates before being beaten to death. One inmate was made to bark like a dog and lap at a puddle of motor oil, while a guard and his mates from the village jumped up and down on his back until he was dead. The guards would make videos of this butchery for their home entertainment. But the most extraordinary hallmark of the carnage was its grotesque intimacy. People knew their torturers, and had often grown up alongside them.

The mine installations have become emblems of evil: rusty boxcars sit along the railway tracks leading out of the complex. In 1992, this rolling stock was loaded with Bosnian deportees. Spidery iron tentacles, conveyor belts and limbs of machinery link one shed to another, silent and skeletal

like the inmates who were packed inside.

Nothing happened here

Now, three sentries stop us. Two of these lads are from the village of Omarska itself, and had worked at the mine. "Nothing happened here," asserts a bright-eyed 28-year-old who was employed as a mine technician and has stayed on with the security staff, now in military uniform. Iron ore was processed here, he says, up until the end of 1992. "So how can it have been any kind of camp in August that year? We are from Omarska, we would have known." He elaborates: "They came here recently, the Americans, looking for mass graves, but they didn't find any. There are no mass graves here. There was no camp — ever."

The technician's friend and co-sentry is only 24, from the village but "too young to have worked at the mine." He says: "I blame the journalists. The Muslims paid the media, and the television pictures were forged." There is a fascination with deception. "Anyone could do that," says the 28-year-old.

We ask them their names. The answer from the technician, suddenly harsh, is unexpected. "We had a nice chat, but names are a secret. The Muslims know me and I know them. But they have to produce evidence of what I did. These days, they can just come up to you in the street and take you to The Hague. That's how they work."

"Did you know Dusko Tadic?" I ask. They shrug and mumble. "Not well. He had a nice cafe in Kozarac. There was no camp here...."

At the briefing in August 1992 at the Prijedor town hall, from where Omarska was administered, the authorities insisted that there was no camp, only an "investigation centre." (It was in the town hall that I briefly met Tadic that year). The figure responsible for day-to-day administration of the camp was Milan Kovacevic, a man with swablike moustache and a "U.S. Marines" T-shirt. He decreed then that there was nothing the world could teach Serbs about concentration camps, since he had been raised in one — Jasenovac — where the Croatian collaborationist regime imprisoned and killed thousands of Serbs and Jews and Croatian dissidents between 1941 and 1945. After our discovery of Omarska, the media circus descended and the camp was assigned the task of explaining to the world's cameras what an "investigation centre" is.

In 1992 Kovacevic's eyes were fiery with enthusiasm for what he called "a great moment in the history of the Serbs." They are still fiery now, but from some other emotion. He has a taste for home-made plum brandy, and he extracts some from his cupboard at 9 a.m. It has been a good year for plums, he explains, but the jam factories are all shut. Shame to let the fruit go to waste.

Moment of madness

Kovacevic is also a medical man, now director of the town hospital of Prijedor. Despite growing up "to learn that all Germans were killers," he elected to go to Germany to study anaesthesiology. He is still a proud nationalist who "wanted to make this a Serb land, without Muslims." But his certainty about the ends conceals doubt about the means. What about burning the Muslim houses along the road? Was that necessary, or a moment of madness?

Kovacevic proceeds cautiously, accompanied by a second glass of brandy: "Both things. A necessary fight and a moment of madness. The houses were burned at the beginning when people were losing control. People weren't behaving normally." This comes as a surprise. "Was it all a terrible mistake?" "To be sure, it was all a terrible mistake." A third glass, and suddenly, unprompted: "We knew very well what happened at Auschwitz or Dachau, and we knew very well how it started and how it was done. What we did was the same as Auschwitz or Dachau, but it was a mistake. It was planned to have been a camp, but not a concentration camp."

Usually it is only "enemies of the Serb people" who invoke Auschwitz when talking about Omarska. But the anaesthetist ploughs boldly on. He has never had this conversation before, he says. In fact, no one in Bosnia had had this conversation before. "Omarska," he continues, "was planned as a camp, but was turned into something else because of this loss of control. I cannot explain the loss of control. You could call it collective madness."

Another glass of brandy to steel the spirit, and for reasons not hard to guess his childhood in Jasenovac comes to mind. "Six hundred thousand were killed in Jasenovac," he muses. "I was taken there as a baby, by my aunt. My mother was in the mountains, hiding. We remember everything. History is made that way. But Jasenovac was run by Croats; why did the Serbs turn on the Muslims? Kovacevic straightens himself. "There is a direct connection between what happened to the Muslims in our camps and the fact that there had been some Muslim soldiers in the pro-Nazi Croatia. They committed war crimes, and now it is the other way round."

In Omarska, he says, "there were not more than 100 killed, whereas Jasenovac was a killing factory." Only 100 killed at Omarska? He blushes. "I said there were 100 killed, not 100 who died." Then Kovacevic loses his way and throws off caution: "Oh, I don't know how many were killed in there. God knows, it's a wind tunnel, this part of the world, a hurricane blowing to and fro...."

By now the cheaply paneled room is steaming with

the exhaled fumes of fast-disappearing cigarettes, a fifth glass and talk of death. So, Doctor, who planned this madness? "It all looks very well-planned, if your view is from New York," he says. He edges forward on his low chair, as if to whisper some personal advice. "But here, when everything is burning, and breaking apart inside people's heads — this was something for the psychiatrists. These people should all have been taken to psychiatrists, but there weren't enough at the time."

I don't sleep so well

In 1992, Kovacevic did not hide his role in operating the camp, but now The Hague is becoming serious. Were you part of this insanity, Doctor? "If someone acquitted me, saying that I was not part of that collective madness, then I would admit that this was not true... If things go wrong in the hospital, then I am guilty. If you have to do things by killing people, well — that is my personal secret. Now my hair is white, I don't sleep so well."

Kovacevic's boss was the mayor of Prijedor, Milomir Stakic. I remember him barking in 1992 about an armed Islamic conspiracy against the Serbs, coordinated by the United States. At that time he was the man with the authority to grant or refuse access to Omarska. When I meet Stakic again, I find out he is also a medical man, director of the day-care health centre in Prijedor, not too far from Omarska. His specialisation in neuropsychiatry was interrupted by war and political office. Dr. Stakic introduces a fellow with a menacing air, Viktor Kondic, whom he calls his deputy at the health clinic.

Stakic swivels back and forth in his chair as he speaks. "As a doctor," he says, "I saw many wounded and mutilated people. The question was: do the Serbs stay on their knees or go back to Jasenovac a second time? If there was a threat to the Serbs was the reaction perhaps a little too much. No," he snaps. What about Omarska? Kondic intervenes quickly and disagreeably: "Omarska was a mine. An iron-ore mine. That is all." The reports, the television pictures? Dr. Stakic clarifies: "They were pictures of Serbs in Muslim camps. There were no prisoners there."

Then comes an immediate negation: "Omarska was for Muslims with illegal weapons. Omarska was not a hotel" — he manages his only smile, and it is not an agreeable one — "but Omarska was not a concentration camp."

"The Serbs go to extremes only when their freedom is threatened," says Stakic, suddenly and oddly. "Unfortunately," chimes in Kondic, who now describes himself as a "lawyer" (we later find out he is a secret policeman) and whose eyes roll skyward, "we learned to defend our freedom in concentration camps." There ensues a long and tortuous conversation not about

Omarska but about Jasenovac. The wintry night has fallen, the streets outside are still. Prijedor is wrapped in fog. Within there is a lull, until Stakic volunteers a strange remark: "It is very brave of you to be sitting here like this with us, so late in the evening."

The journey to Omarska in 1992 began and ended in the Serbian capital Belgrade. Upon arrival, we were welcomed by a senior middle manager of the self-proclaimed Serb Republic in Bosnia-Herzegovina, professor Nikola Koljivic. He was to supervise our access to Omarska.

A specialist on Shakespeare, the impish Koljivic has seduced many Westerners with his simple quoting of the Bard and command of English. The day after we finally found the camps, his invitation to tea and cakes at a smart hotel back in Belgrade was irresistible. "So you found them," he said sardonically. "Congratulations!" And then, in a piquant voice that evoked his favourite Shakespearean character, Iago, he embarked on a double-edged reproach: "It took you a long time to find them, didn't it? Three months! And so near to Venice! All you people could think about was poor, sophisticated Sarajevo. Ha-ha!" And then, with a chill in his voice: "None of you ever had your holidays at Omarska, did you? No Olympic Games in Prijedor!"

Digging up the bones

I find him again, in wintry Banja Luka. In 1996 Koljivic walks over to the window and stares down at the people trudging through the slush. This miserable place has achieved what it wanted. It has "won" its war: every Muslim gone, every mosque disappeared without a trace. Koljivic, transfixed, loses his flow and begins to talk to himself. "Bones," he mutters. "Bones, we were digging up the bones." His eyes widen unpleasantly. He appears hypnotised, his imagination ambushed. "The bones of our dead from 1941. We dug them up to give them proper burial on Serbian land.... We found shoes. Children's shoes. How much more alive a shoe is than bones...." (This was a macabre prologue to the war, in the late eighties: a Serb cult of exhuming their World War II dead). Then the professor suddenly comes to his senses. "Er... I'm just trying to illustrate the psychology."

Finally, I feel, we are approaching an answer to the question: How did Omarska happen? What the Serbs have done is to project their own obsessive and disastrous "racial memory" (Koljivic's term) onto their perceived enemies. The Serbs' inimitable cult of the victim demanded that they create victims. Their experience of concentration camps demanded that they create concentration camps. They lie and manipulate, but insist on a conspiracy of lies and manipulation against them. When they look into the mirror, they see someone they must call their enemy, so as not to see themselves.

When they look at history, they must contort it lest they see what they do. They must rewrite the history they define.

And then there is the psychodrama of the restless dead, of professor Koljivic's bones. The Serbs exhumed the bones of their own dead from World War II, only to bury their enemies in mass graves. Now they exhumed those victims and move them away from the glare of the Hague investigations, meanwhile disinterring their own relatives for reburial on "Serbian soil." The joke is that the only people enjoying freedom of movement under the Dayton plan are the dead.

Professor Koljivic is fascinated by victims and masters. "The basic problem with the Muslims," he says, "is their problem with equality. Psychologically, they are either masters or servants. Now they want to be masters again." It is a description not of the Muslims, but of the Serbs. By way of farewell, the professor produces his current reading: Daniel Boorstin's *The Image*. He reads aloud from the foreword: "This book is about our art of self-deception. How we hide reality from ourselves." For the perpetrators of Bosnia's carnage, the reckoning is an opportunity to confront what they have done and exorcise it — much as the Germans did out of the ashes of the Third Reich. But, undefeated, the Serbs choose to "hide reality from themselves." They think they were right, and they can think it again.

Thousands of miles away this spring, a book is published — Daniel Golligorsky's *Hitler's Willing Executioners* — positing the terrifying notion that it was a whole society that unleashed the Nazi Holocaust, not an elite that poisoned the minds of an otherwise innocent people. We had the same argument here, over and over again: can such a whirlwind of violence be dictated by an elite that dupes and otherwise kindly, boozily folk?

Here at the village of Omarska, in the shadow of an accursed mine, everyone knew and nobody objected. There are soldiers and pretty girls sipping coffee at the Wiski Bar, where the main street meets the railway siding that runs into the mine. For four months, as they freebooted around the scrappy streets, these people were yards away from the screaming and the mutilation. They would have watched the "ethnic cleansing" convoys pass, out on the road to nowhere. I was part of such a convoy of 1,600 wretched Bosnian Muslim deportees myself: we were herded over the mountains at gun point, through a terrifying gauntlet of hatred and spitting, or else cold nonchalance, from the Serbs who beheld us from the roadside.

The people in Omarska's Wiski Bar, listening to Madonna on the jukebox, would have watched the trucks enter camp Omarska full of people, only to come out empty. Perhaps they spat then too. But now, in the frozen village, we are told: "There was no camp here — ever."

King calls on government to extend every help to Palestinians

(Continued from page 1)

of Jerusalem and the holy places.

He said that there were recent discussions about Jerusalem and that Jordan was interested in knowing if these discussions had any thing to do with it.

"I think that my brother the minister (of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs) followed up on the results of what happened in this vein and we can affirm our pride in the position taken by the Awqaf representatives in Jerusalem whom we entrusted with the responsibility for the sake of Jerusalem," he said.

He added that the latest incidents cannot be taken in isolation from developments in the region and the stalled peace process.

"Naturally, I think we cannot take what happened in isolation from other incidents in the region — movement towards achieving peace, the momentum in terms of the feeling that this peace should be achieved and should be comprehensive and then the frustration that started with the Hebron (mosque) massacre and the ensuing incidents which claimed many lives. These have proved that there are those who work against peace out of their beliefs or any other reason, even if they were a minority here and there."

The King said after Egypt chose its path and signed a peace treaty with Israel and the Palestinians did the same Jordan could wait no longer since it could have been left struggling in "the swirl of the substitute homeland."

He said the Jordanian-Israeli treaty restored to Jordan its land and water rights and fixed its international borders with Israel.

He added that the aim was also to maintain the Kingdom as the shield and wall which supports the Palestinian people in their pursuit to regain their rights on their national soil.

The King expressed his belief that the Israeli-Palestinian clashes were a result of the frustration fuelled by the stagnation in the peace process and called for bringing momentum to it.

"I think part of the problem of which we are suffering now is the implementation of (the agreements), which were not translated on the ground, neither regarding Hebron nor other dimensions. The latest days brought us new details on Syrian-Israeli negotiations that have covered a lot of ground regardless of the fact whether signed documents were exchanged between the two parties and whether they were kept in preparation for an Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 (ceasefire) lines for full and comprehensive peace, and

then an agenda to reach that end. This was the stage of negotiations which we followed in Wye Plantation and so on. In fact, I believe, we should, along with the rest of the world insist on moving first from where we are to a point where what we agreed upon should be implemented... as fast as possible so that this peace be given reasons for its sustainability..."

He added: "When we talk about the security of any people this security is the security of all as well. When we talk about peace it is as well a peace for all, a peace that is based on foundations of justice and rightfulness, mainly the Palestinian right on the Palestinian national soil."

He urged all peace-loving forces in the world to support peace in the Middle East and called for pooling all efforts to save it.

He said Jordan offered to cooperate with the Palestinian leadership on all issues related to Jerusalem in the latest meeting with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, adding that there were plans to continue the dialogue before the eruption of the latest clashes.

"This is an issue that should be focused on and protected and efforts should be exerted as fast as possible to resume it so as to have a unified stand and so as every one of us knows what exactly the other brother wants... More than once I contacted President Yasser Arafat. I have contacted Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu. I contacted President Mubarak. Particularly on these issues our contacts at the level of ambassadors with important countries in this world are continuing. We are ready for everything and ready to perform any duty we can towards this cause, towards our brethren who are suffering in order to revive hope in a serious quest of just and comprehensive peace..."

On his recent visits to Qatar and Bahrain, His Majesty voiced support for efforts exerted to resolve the Qatari-Bahraini dispute in a peaceful manner, paying tribute to Saudi Arabia's role in this regard, and in particular to efforts exerted by Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah.

He said the objective was to resolve the dispute before the International Court of Justice rules on the issue.

That way, the King said, external intervention in the dispute could be averted and an Arab solution that will have "no loser or no winner" could be achieved.

Earlier in the day, the King met with members of the Royal Commission for Jerusalem Affairs and reviewed the situation in the Holy City.

In the meeting, attended

by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the King reaffirmed Jordan's support for the Palestinians' complete rights on their national soil. He pointed out that Jordan had played and would continue to play a great role in safeguarding the holy shrines in Jerusalem.

Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh and Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs Abdul Salam Abbad attended the meeting.

In an interview given to the Qatari News Agency earlier, King Hussein expressed deep regret over the developments in the Palestinian territories and urged international organisations to move rapidly to address the situation and prevent further Israeli measures that would endanger security and stability in the region.

The King stressed the need for effective international measures to monitor Israel's moves in Jerusalem.

"International organisations should examine the situation and report on the changes that occurred in Arab Jerusalem at the hands of the Israelis," he said.

He suggested that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and other world organisations act towards addressing the situation.

Asked whether the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as prime minister of Israel was behind the present difficulties facing the peace process, the King said: "The election of a prime minister in Israel is an entirely internal affair."

But the King warned that extremists have been acting towards sowing seeds of suspicion and apprehension that impede the process.

Asked whether Crown Prince Hassan has postponed a visit to Israel in the light of the recent developments, the King said that the postponement was due to the Prince's own previous engagements. But the King said that "Jordan uses its international relations to serve our national interests and to defend these interests anywhere and at any time."

In the interview, conducted at the conclusion of his visit to Qatar last week, the King described Jordanian-Qatari relations as exemplary and marked with brotherly affection.

The King said that the situation in Iraq was stabilising following the recent tension there.

He stressed the need for safeguarding Iraq's sovereignty and territorial integrity but expressed his pain over the sufferings of the Iraqi people.

"Our hope is to see Iraq living in democracy, with

its people enjoying respect of human rights and political pluralism," said King Hussein.

Referring to Turkey's recent announcement of plans to create a security buffer zone along its borders with Iraq, the King said that Jordan rejects any interference in Iraq's affairs or any infringement on its territory.

On the recent unrest in southern Jordan, the King said that many elements were trying to tamper with Jordan's security because they envy the Kingdom's achievements.

Lauding the Kabarti government he said: "This government has shouldered its responsibility and the steps it took so far reflect its courage and ability to shoulder this responsibility. There will not be any change of government under pressure from any source that does not wish to see Jordan doing its duty."

King Hussein said that the Kingdom's economic restructuring programme was an inevitable step "so that we can stand on our feet and achieve economic reform."

He added that the recent increase in the price of bread was approved only when arrangements were made for Jordanian citizens to receive cash compensation for the difference in price.

Jordan told the U.N. General Assembly on Friday that the deteriorating situation in the Palestinian territories was a serious threat to the peace process.

Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Khaled Madadha also urged the U.N. Security Council to take measures and adopt resolutions that would deal with the critical conditions in the territories.

He added that some points in the called-for resolutions include closing the tunnel, restoring calm to the region, establishing an international fact-finding committee to deal with the issue and finding solutions for the violations of the holy sites in Jerusalem.

Mr. Madadha demanded that the draft resolutions include a clear Israeli commitment to rapidly implement the signed agreements, especially an army redeployment in Hebron, to initiate the final status talks and the adoption of all necessary measures to prevent any recurrence of violence.

He also asked the Israeli government to resume peace talks on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

Mr. Madadha called for an immediate end of the closure imposed on the Palestinian self-ruled territories.

Palestinian police rein in protesters

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Netanyahu.

The two leaders are locked in a stand-off over an archaeological tunnel near Muslim shrines in Jerusalem.

Mr. Netanyahu's decision to open a second entrance to the tunnel from Jerusalem's Muslim quarter sparked the violence, brought widespread international condemnation and raised eyebrows in the Clinton administration, which is usually supportive of Israel.

U.S. officials said Mr. Arafat was insisting that Israel close the new entrance to the tunnel before he agrees to meet with Mr. Netanyahu to restore order in Gaza and the West Bank.

The officials, speaking in Washington, left no doubt they considered the opening Tuesday of an archaeological tunnel the spark that ignited battles between Palestinian police and Israeli troops.

U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk met Friday with Mr. Netanyahu but declined to give details of the discussions.

"I think there is a willingness on both sides and an understanding on both sides now that they are on the brink and that it is very important to step back and engage in negotiations," he said in an ABC interview. "We are directly engaged with both sides in trying to get this process moving again."

U.S. officials have also criticised Mr. Arafat's call for protests and said the involvement of Palestinian police in exchanges with Israeli police had complicated the tense situation on the West Bank and in Gaza.

On Thursday, however, Palestinian radio broadcast appeals in Mr. Arafat's name for Palestinian security forces to seize their fire, and American officials credited both sides with a desire to find a solution to the deadliest outbreak of violence in the three years since Israel relinquished control of Gaza and parts of the West Bank to the Palestinian National Authority.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher, concerned the fighting could jeopardise the faltering U.S.-supported peace process, hoped to turn the outbreak into an opportunity to accelerate negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians on the future of Jerusalem and other touchy issues.

Diplomatic sources said Mr. Netanyahu had rejected an offer by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to host the summit in Cairo.

Mr. Arafat will not meet Mr. Netanyahu alone without a prior guarantee that the tunnel entrance will be sealed. The tunnel, which Israel closed on Friday citing security reasons, is scheduled to reopen on Sunday after the Jewish Sabbath.

"Our demands are clear. We want them to close the

tunnel, put the peace process back on track, and immediately implement the Oslo accords," Arafat aide Nabil Abu Rdainah said. Smouldering Palestinian frustration with Mr. Netanyahu's foot-dragging on the Oslo self-rule agreement, which includes a partial Israeli troop withdrawal in Hebron, ignited when he opened the tunnel beside the Al Aqsa and Dome of the Rock mosques.

Since then Mr. Christopher and his Middle East coordinator Dennis Ross have made dozens of phone calls to Mr. Netanyahu, Mr. Arafat, Mr. Mubarak and other key leaders.

"The Israelis want a bilateral meeting. We welcome a three-way meeting in Cairo and the Americans are working hard to convene a meeting attended by either Christopher or Ross," Mr. Abu Rdainah added.

Mr. Arafat said the meeting would take place but did not specify a time.

"I will meet him (Netanyahu) in Cairo," Mr. Arafat told reporters in self-ruled Gaza.

Mr. Netanyahu has accused Mr. Arafat of "cynically" exploiting the tunnel issue and instigating the violence. Palestinians called the tunnel's opening an assault on Islamic holy shrines and an Israeli attempt to Judaise Arab East Jerusalem.

"Keeping the tunnel open means pushing the whole region towards irresponsible violence," the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) said in the statement.

Mr. Arafat has ordered his 30,000-strong paramilitary force to rein in demonstrators and not to shoot at Israelis unless fired upon. Youths clashed, however, for a fourth straight day with Israeli troops. Palestinians said 30 people were wounded. Soldiers fired rubber-coated metal bullets and threw percussion grenades at stone-throwers at Kalandiyah refugee camp between Jerusalem and Ramallah.

In the villages of Halhoul and Beit Umar near Hebron soldiers fired tear-gas and rubber bullets at Palestinians who burned tyres and blocked roads.

Palestinian demonstrators came to the rescue of four Israeli police injured when their jeep overturned in East Jerusalem while on the way to quell an Arab protest in nearby Jabal Al Mukaber village, witnesses said.

Palestinians gave the soldiers water and helped them to ambulances, they added. Israeli security forces had earlier shot and wounded three Palestinians in Jabal Al Mukaber.

Palestinians in the West Bank observed a general strike to mourn the nearly 60 victims killed in clashes. Fourteen Israeli soldiers have died.

The Palestinian health minister accused Israel of preventing medical personnel and supplies from reaching wounded Arabs.

Riyad Al Zaanoun compiled a list of incidents in which he said Israel had fired at Palestinian ambulances, blocked the evacuation of wounded and refused to allow medical supplies to pass through areas under Israeli control. He said one medic was killed and a number had been wounded while treating victims.

"Don't let there be more killings," a Palestinian police commander pleaded as his men formed a human chain to keep 1,500 Palestinian protesters away from an Israeli army roadblock on the outskirts of Ramallah — where only two days earlier Palestinian officers had battled Israeli troops with automatic weapons.

"Israeli soldiers in Ramallah threw quantities of medical supplies in the street," Mr. Zaanoun told Reuters. "These supplies were supposed to be distributed to West Bank hospitals and clinics." The Israeli army said it was checking the report.

In all, 56 Palestinians, 14 Israelis and two Egyptians have been killed in three days of fighting between Israelis and Palestinians, according to wire agencies.

On Friday, the clashes spread to the Al Aqsa Mosque compound, one of Islam's holiest sites. Four Palestinians were killed when Israeli riot police fired rubber bullets — and worshippers say also live rounds — to disperse stone throwers in the compound.

Senior Israeli and Palestinian commanders met late Friday and agreed to do everything in their power to stop further bloodshed.

In the past three days, hundreds of Palestinian officers, egged on by the demonstrators, had engaged in shooting battles with Israeli troops.

But in a clear shift, Palestinian police appeared determined Saturday to quell riots, and in several locations in the West Bank and Gaza pushed back protesters trying to reach Jewish settlements and Israeli army positions.

In Ramallah, Palestinian police reinforcements were quickly deployed when some 1,500 protesters, most of them supporters of Mr. Arafat's Islamic militant opposition, tried to approach the Israeli checkpoint. From time to time, helmeted Palestinian riot police swung black night sticks to force back the crowd.

Near the tiny Jewish settlement of Nissan in the northern Gaza Strip, police turned back about 200 Palestinian youths marching towards the Israeli enclave.

In Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip, Palestinian police commander Abdul Razek Majajda told local officers Saturday that they must arrest anyone trying to shoot or attack Israelis. "We must calm the situation now," he said.

On Friday, fierce fighting

had erupted in Rafah, with Israeli gun ships firing at Palestinian gunmen and Israeli tanks surrounding the area.

An Israeli colonel was killed in the shootout. Egyptian military sources said Saturday that an Egyptian officer who was hit by fire from an Israeli helicopter Friday had died of his wounds.

In the West Bank village of Al Khader, which is still under Israeli control, Palestinian youths stoned Israeli troops and rolled boulders into the street to keep the soldiers from chasing them.

Palestinians are not preparing for a new intifada against Israel, despite the clashes which have claimed almost 70 lives in four days, Palestinian official Faisal Al Hussein told the German weekly Der Spiegel.

But he cautioned that it might not be possible to prevent violent reactions, even by Palestinian police, if the Netanyahu government did not show more interest in continuing the peace process.

Mr. Hussein, the leading PLO official in Jerusalem, told the magazine the decisive spark in the unrest had not been the tunnel opening itself but Israel's "lack of feeling for the sensitivity of the situation."

"They carry out changes in their own favour before negotiations about the final status of Jerusalem have even begun," he told the magazine, according to an advance release from Monday's edition.

He said Palestinians now had an administration which provided them with an alternative to violent protest like the intifada, launched in 1987.

"In contrast to the days of the intifada, the Palestinians now have a government. The way of orderly negotiations is known. Only the Israelis must really want to walk along it."

"If the Palestinians continue to get the feeling that the Israelis are not interested in continuing with the peace process, the Palestinian government will not be able to control the people, and not always its own armed police."

An Egyptian militant group urged all Muslims to wage holy war to free Jerusalem from "the hands of Jews, the killers of prophets."

"Let the Muslim masses move strongly and firmly towards jihad, without fear of nuclear or other weapons," said the Vanguard of Conquest, a revival of the Jihad group that assassinated President Anwar Sadat in 1981.

"The solution will not be achieved through nationalist and secularist banners, speeches, statements or conferences," the group said in a faxed statement.

The outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, the most influential group in Egypt, also called on Thursday on Arabs to wage jihad to uproot the Jewish state.

Jordan gets invitation to MENA conference

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Egypt said in the letter of invitation that convening of the conference comes at a

time the Middle East peace process is passing through a delicate phase, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

The receipt of the invitation established that Cairo

was going ahead with convening the MENA conference despite the turmoil in the Middle East peace process after threatening to cancel or postpone it if

Israel did not make progress in its peace negotiations with the Palestinians and implemented what has already been agreed.



Israelis attend a rally in Tel Aviv on September 28, urging Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to pursue peace and for Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to stop Palestinian police from firing on Israeli soldiers following four days of violence in which nearly 70 people have been killed. Organisers estimated a crowd of over 20,000 attended (Reuters photo)

Hamas calls on government

(Continued from page 1)

bers of the Palestinian police who battled the Israeli soldiers to stand up against the "traitors" within the Palestinian National Authority. The statement also reiterated Hamas rejection of the Oslo deal.

Meanwhile, an Islamist deputy has renewed allegations that Hamas activist Issam Al Najjar was tortured during his detention, indirectly brushing aside government assertions that the allegations were baseless.

In a Sept. 23 letter to Prime Minister Khabiri made available to the Jordan Times Saturday, Islamic Action Front Deputy Theeb Anis said he was informed by Mr. Najjar's family that the Hamas activist was subjected to physical and psychological torture.

He contended that security officers threatened Mr. Najjar to arrest him again if he spoke of his alleged torture and that he was being sought again for doing so. The deputy, who represents Zarqa Governorate where Mr. Najjar resides, claimed the authorities had taken Mr. Najjar's brother-in-law Omar Najem as "hostage" because they failed to capture Mr. Najjar.

The allegations about Mr. Najjar's torture first appeared in the Islamist weekly Al Sabeel, whose editor Helmi Al Asmar was subsequently arrested for publishing the article claiming the torture of Mr. Najjar.

Mr. Asmar, who is deputy president of the Jordan Press Association board, was arrested Sept. 18 and remains in custody.

A government source who spoke on condition of anonymity had denied that Mr. Najjar was tortured. The source claimed that Mr. Asmar published the article against his own judgement and under direct pressure from the Islamic Action Front.

Royal Decree commutes death sentences

(Continued from page 1)

Soviet occupation of their country.

One of the convicts, Saudi Arabian Mohammad Khalifeh who was sentenced in absentia and said to be a son-in-law of reputed extremist financier Osama Ben Laden, was acquitted of all charges in a review of the sentence after he volunteered to return here for a trial in July last year.

Two others — Omani Mohammad Harithi and Jordanian Mohammad Sawarkeh — were also given death sentences in absentia. The clemency given by the King did not cover those two since they remain fugitive.

That left eight people who were on the death row until the decree issued Saturday.

Deputy Deeb Abdullah, who occupies one of the Amman First District seats in the Lower House of Parliament, gave his vote of

confidence to the Kabarti government in March in return for what he told the press then that a pledge by the prime minister that the death sentences handed down by the State Security Court would be commuted.

"I had approached the prime minister after my voters urged me to seek clemency for the convicts and he (Mr. Kabarti) pledged that the death sentences would not be carried out," Mr. Abdullah told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

Mr. Abdullah's decision to vote in favour of the government infuriated the opposition Islamic Action Front (IAF), which had enticed him into joining the group after winning the 1993 elections. In retaliation for breaking ranks and voting confidence in the Kabarti government, Mr. Abdullah was expelled from the IAF bloc.

IMF officials see global growth improvement, caution U.S.

sensus emerging to offer debt relief of up to 80 per cent on a case-by-case basis. Paris Club officials had no comment on the likely scale of its proposed debt relief.

Private development agency Oxfam International slammed the Paris Club for dragging its heels on debt relief.

"Without a clear commitment from the Paris Club to reduce 90 per cent of debt, the viability of the entire initiative could be undermined," the group said in a statement.

According to some estimates, about four or five countries would not be able to put their economies back on even keel and achieve so-called debt sustainability if the Paris Club only extends 80 per cent debt relief.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — World economic momentum is strong and could get stronger but the United States must guard against overheating and Europe against continued failure to tackle unemployment, senior IMF officials have said.

"World economic growth remains reasonably strong," International Monetary Fund (IMF) research director Michael Mussa told a press conference. "We expect a modest strengthening of economic growth with continuing good performance on the inflation front."

While Mr. Mussa said the United States next year should experience a "slight slowing of growth" down from the 1996 pace of 2.4 per cent, he nonetheless warned that some tightening of credit might be in order.

"There are some slight indications of upward movement in wage levels, but nothing serious at the moment" he pointed out. "There is not evidence of serious overheating but some slight firming in monetary conditions would seem prudent."

The U.S. Federal Reserve, apparently deter-

mining that inflation does not now pose a threat to the United States, decided Tuesday to leave interest rates unchanged.

Mr. Mussa said the IMF expected a "modest recovery" in the European Union, with growth approaching 2.5 to three per cent between the second half of 1996 and the end of 1997.

But Flemming Larsen, deputy director of IMF research, stressed that despite the pickup unemployment in Europe would not fall below 8.5 per cent by the year 2000 in the absence of significant labour market reform.

"We have really got to see the comprehensive reforms (in Europe) that we believe would better balance supply and demand on the labour market," he said.

Mr. Larsen also argued for continued monetary flexibility in Europe in light of low inflation levels. "It's probably too soon to conclude that the recent round of interest rate reductions has run its course."

But Mr. Mussa cautioned that it would be a mistake for Europe to ease credit too dramatically in a bid to

spur growth and bring down unemployment.

He said that while Britain's current monetary policy is "appropriate," the pace of economic activity is expected to pick up in 1997 and growth "may push inflation above the 2.5 per cent target" set by the government.

There is therefore a need for "some modest firmings of monetary conditions" next year if the IMF growth forecast is realised.

But he added that a potential rate rise in Britain would be "more an issue of prudence" rather than "a crisis situation."

In Japan, according to Mr. Mussa, there are "notable indications of recovery, which we expect to continue for the remainder of this year and the years to come."

Among countries making the transition to a market economy, he hailed Poland, where he said performance had returned to pre-transition levels.

In Russia, he predicted, "output will continue to fall but we expect to see clear evidence of recovery next year."

Iran sees \$1.5b extra oil revenue

LONDON (R) — Worried investors are moving to cash in the face of escalating violence between Israel and the Palestinians, but fund managers say most of those already exposed to the region are used to political uncertainty.

David McWilliams, senior emerging markets economist at UBS said that Israeli domestic investors, who make up some 94 per cent of the market, had been moving out of stocks and bonds into more liquid instruments like short-term deposits.

"The Israeli portfolio is worth some 527 billion shekels (\$165 billion), 31 per cent of which is now in short-term liquid assets," he said.

"The question now is which way do they go? They can return to stocks and bonds if the situation normalises or they can move to dollar assets, which is the final leap. If they move into dollars we could see a situation which could prompt some currency weakness," he added.

"There is an irresistible logic which concludes that the financial pendulum will swing back in favour of both equities and bonds," Mr. McWilliams indicated.

For international investors, even if they want to exit, the equity market is notoriously illiquid, while local players are already dumping stock.

Lysander Tennant, manager of the \$127 million Israel Fund PLC, a London-listed investment trust, said that under a Labour government "things would not have become so tense."

"Something needs to happen soon to calm the situation. Netanyahu and Yasser Arafat will have to meet — it is in both their interests," he said.

An emerging markets trader in London said renewed war would be "a nightmare."

"I'm getting calls from everywhere from worried investors and the best we can hope at the moment is that it blows out in a couple of weeks, maybe even concen-

trates the government's mind on the peace process.

"It's either that or another intifada," he said in a reference to the bloody and long-drawn Palestinian uprising that died down when the peace process was initiated after the 1991 Gulf war.

But Mr. Tennant said anyone invested in the region must have accepted they were there for the long term. "You can't react quickly, in the sense of selling up. All you can do is maintain a healthy level of cash, which in our case is around seven per cent (of the portfolio) right now."

Other fund managers say the clashes have added to pressure from pressing macro-economic problems like a rocketing budget deficit and an over-valued currency. "Netanyahu has only a few weeks to address both pressing political problems and the budget deficit, which continues to run well above government forecasts," said Mr. McWilliams. "The risk is that he does nothing. Fund man-

agers said that if the current crisis could be dealt with swiftly, the outlook for Israeli markets was promising.

The equity market would benefit from gradually lower interest rates and a weaker currency. The skel is at the top end of its seven per cent trading band. But the bond market, with a real yield of five per cent, is more attractive.

TEHRAN (R) — Iran expects revenue from oil exports to exceed budget forecasts by \$1.5 billion if prices continue to improve for the rest of the year, an official was quoted as saying.

"Iranian oil revenues for the current fiscal year would go up by \$1.5 billion com-

pared to the budget forecasts if prices continue to rise." Qorbanali Dorri-Najafabadi, head of the Iran's Planning and Budget Commission told the Iranian news agency IRNA.

The agency also quoted a report carried by Iranian television saying oil revenue in the five months from March to August 1996 was \$600 million over budget forecasts.


THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen


GLASBERGEN


"My car runs great when I play a Beatles tape, but it refuses to go when I play opera music."

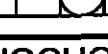
JUMBLE.


Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

HACTY 

TELLU 


COYJEK 

NOCHOP 

Answer: A 




THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME
by Henri Arnold and Mike Arginton

DA DE DA DA DE DE



WHAT HE LIKED
TO SING WHILE
PLAYING BASEBALL.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer:   

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's | Jumbles: STEED CHUTE UNHOLY OUTING
Answer: The cab driver had this while waiting for a
lars - "IDLE" THOUGHTS

Peanuts

RERUN, IT'S TIME FOR SCHOOL! WHERE ARE YOU?

I'M NOT GOING! I'M HIDING UNDER MY BED..

YOU'D BETTER COME OUT..WHAT'S DAD GONNA SAY?

HE UNDERSTANDS.. HE SAID WHEN HE WAS LITTLE, HE HID UNDER THE BED FOR THREE DAYS..

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Andy Capp

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GOOD NIGHT, TAKE CARE!

GOODNIGHT, BOTH

I WISH I WAS AS GOOD AT GAMES AS YOU, MISTER CAPP, BUT WHERE DO I START?

FORTY YEARS AGO SON, FORTY YEARS

Mutt'n' Jeff

WOW! THAT'S THE THIRD CLOSE CALL I HAD TODAY!

FRIDAY, THE 13 TH! GOSH, I'D BETTER HURRY HOME AND STAY IN BED!

AH! NOTHING CAN HAPPEN TO ME HERE!

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**HOROSCOPE
FORECAST FOR SUN-
DAY SEPTEMBER
29, 1996**

By Thomas S. Pierson,
Astrologer, Carroll
Righter Foundation.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Don't permit the antics of good friends to get you down today or you could find yourself in quite a difficulty. The planets are acting up, later this evening, however, keep poised and everything will be fine.

TAURUS: (April 20th to May 21st) Take no risks with influential people today or you could find yourself in a difficult situation which will not be prosperous. This may get you more than you bargained for later this evening, however, keep your nose to the grindstone.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You may be tempted to break away from your orthodox way of living at this time. However, you may live to regret it. Later this evening you can go out on the town with your loved ones and close friends for some fun activities.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Be sure to use only your mature judgement today, since you have had difficulty with any rational decisions which are present. Your mate may be edgy later this evening, however, don't react in an adverse manner at this time.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Be careful to avoid the unconventional today and be with close friends who are tried and true. Enjoy tranquility later this evening with your loved ones and have a peaceful time together at your resi-

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Do not use unusual methods of operation today in trying to make others happy, otherwise you could make them and yourself contemptible. Gain more energy and feel happier later this evening with your loved ones and relax.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You are tempted to overspend today for fleeting pleasures, however, this is not a good idea since you could need extra funds for the days ahead. Be more concerned with security of your loved ones and they will appreciate it.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) It is not wise to invite guest into your home today since you want it to be the showplace of which you can be proud of. Don't make any thoughtless changes you may regret in the days ahead so that your loved ones will be happy.

November 22 to December 21) Your studies today of philosophies may have brought you to the point of confusion, so drop it at this time. Later this evening you can relax with your loved ones at home and get prepared for a busy week ahead.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You may feel unhappy about finances today, however cheer up and go after whatever will improve this. Later this evening will be good for meeting with fellow associates and decide on a method of cooperation for your success.

QUARUS: (January 21 to February 19) Avoid any acquaintances today who have a tendency to make you feel nervous and sick. You those close friends whom you can depend on. Be with those who are soothing and give you peace of mind to handle

ISCES: (February 20 to March 20). Know what your personal goals are today and gain them by proven methods of operation. Your mate is disappointed, so be kind and provide whatever support and/or her desires from you and will receive much affection in return.

Birthstone of September: Sapphire — **Love:** Lazuli.

BU
ISI

By Chris
Frost

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Damon Hill looks towards his new team manager, Tom Walkinshaw, as he announces that he will drive for the TWR Arrows Formula One team next season, in London. Hill currently leads the Formula One World Championship which will be decided in Japan in two weeks time (Reuters photo)

Hill confident over future with TWR Arrows

LONDON (AFP) — Damon Hill Saturday was adamant he could become a serious world title challenger despite signing for an unsung Formula One team.

Hill put a stop to speculation over his employment in 1997 by announcing he had clinched a one-year contract with TWR Arrows, who have only managed one point in 13 races this year.

The 36-year-old Briton will win the drivers' world title should he notch up just one point in the Japanese Grand Prix on October 13.

But Hill said the decision to join TWR Arrows — the team set up by Tom Walkinshaw, who moved into Formula One this year by taking over Arrows, does not rule him out as a contender in future years.

"We will not make any claims about 1997," said Hill, who finally secured a drive after his exit from Williams-Renault.

"It is going to be the beginnings in 1997, but I believe we will make rapid progress and that is the prospect that really excites me," he said.

"What I have seen of Tom Walkinshaw's operation is the germ and the building block of a great team of the future."

"Tom has offered me more than I hoped for — a rewarding package and a great challenge to work in partnership with him to develop a winning Formula One team for the future."

"There is the added draw of seeing Tom in action, because everything this man touches becomes a winner. Together we should be worth watching."

"I don't think anyone has any illusions about the task ahead of us. Winning at Formula One is not easy."

"But in the very near future I believe that we will be talking about a race-winning car and team."

"Tom is an archetypal racing man — a championship driver, the man I and others credit with turning around Benetton's fortunes."

The Scot was at Benetton when Michael Schumacher took the title at the expense of Hill in 1994-95. He also helped Make Ligier more competitive before quitting the French team this year to run his own Formula One outfit.

Walkinshaw revealed at Friday's hastily-convened news conference in London that Hill has been his number one target all season.

"One of the first things that I decided was that I wanted a top-flight driver to lead the team," he said.

"I believed that we needed a driver with the highest calibre of ability and driving experience to help mould our team into a championship contender in the future."

"Quite early in the season I started watching Damon pretty closely and obviously I liked what I saw."

Walkinshaw made his interest known after the recent Italian Grand Prix in Monza when the paddock speculation suggested that Jordan-Peugeot and Stewart Grand Prix were the main contenders for Hill's signature.

The two met at TWR's Oxfordshire headquarters after last weekend's Portuguese Grand Prix and agreed the shock deal.

"I think he was pretty impressed with what he saw," added Walkinshaw.

"He spent about seven hours going through the different aspects of the programme."

"Considering the other attractive options available to him, by joining TWR Damon obviously recognises the enormous potential of our team."

"Damon's abilities are beyond question. He stands on the verge of his first world title. He is a proven winner over several seasons with 20 Grand Prix wins from 66 starts — a quite outstanding strike rate."

"The team's goal is to be Formula One world champions in the shortest possible time. Damon's recruitment brings the day when we achieve that goal considerably closer."

Arrows' joint have run as Footwork Hart this year, scored their solitary point when Jos Verstappen finished sixth in Argentina. The Dutchman and fellow driver Ricardo Rosset of Brazil are not expected to be kept on next year.

The team are likely to announce Hill's partner — Germany's Formula 3000 series leader Jorg Muller is favourite — before the Japanese Grand Prix.

They are also expected to formally announce an engine deal with Yamaha, who currently supply Tyrrell, before that race.

"I think when our engine package is announced, then you will appreciate it is a very strong package," said Walkinshaw.

"It is much better than has ever been done by these people before and will be worth having a driver of Damon's calibre in the team."

Rangers clinch AL West title; A's crush Mariners

ARLINGTON, TEXAS (R) — The Texas Rangers went down fighting in 15 innings, but still clinched their first-ever post-season berth and division title on Friday.

In Arlington, Garret Anderson capped the first six-hit game in Angels team history with a two-run single in the top of the 15th, giving California a 4-3 victory over Texas.

The Rangers, who began as the Washington Senators in 1961 and moved to Texas in 1972, had already secured the American League West title when the Mariners lost at Oakland.

"From day one, we came out playing hard," said Rangers first baseman Will Clark. "We were trying to win it on the field, but we stranded a few runners. But we'll take it and go from here."

Texas had chances to win the division without Seattle's help.

Dean Palmer bounced into a fielder's choice with the bases loaded in the bottom of the 12th.

Palmer homered with two out in the bottom of the 15th and Mickey Tettleton and Mark McLemore walked

before Greg Gohr relieved Pep Harris (2-0). Pinch-hitter Kurt Stillwell struck out to end the game, giving Gohr his first Major-League save.

The end of the five-hour-plus marathon was greeted by fireworks and champagne.

"This clubhouse is full of character," said Texas manager Johnny Oates. "There have been a lot of people behind us all the way. They made the commitment. We played as a group, which helped us make it through this."

Tim Salmon homered for California, becoming the first player in team history with three 30-homer seasons.

In Oakland, Dave Telgheder scattered six hits over 6 2/3 innings and rookie Scott Spiezo's three-run homer keyed a six-run seventh as the Athletics crushed Seattle 8-1, pushing the Mariners to the verge of playoff elimination.

The Mariners are one loss or one Baltimore victory away from being eliminated from the wild-card race.

"We have got to win now," said Seattle superstar

Ken Griffey Jr. "hopefully we can."

Telgheder (4-7) walked two and struck out five. Buddy Groom, Jim Corsi and Carlos Reyes held Seattle to one run, one hit and two walks over the final 2 1/3 innings.

Terry Mulholland (5-4) took the loss.

In Toronto, Joe Carter and John Olerud drove in runs in the third inning as the Blue Jays prevented the Baltimore Orioles from clinching a tie for the wild card with a 3-2 win.

Baltimore's Brady Anderson hit his 49th homer, tying the team mark set by Frank Robinson in 1966.

Baltimore's Roberto Alomar was ejected in the first inning by umpire John Hirschbeck for arguing balls and strikes, his first ejection of the season. Alomar had to be restrained by manager Davey Johnson after bumping into Hirschbeck.

"What's there to regret? I don't regret nothing I did," said Alomar. "It's one in a million, he caught me in a bad moment. It's the first time I reacted the way I was yelling, but I kind of spat at

him, too.

"I don't have nothing against him. I used to respect him a lot. He had problems with his family, his son died. That's tough for anyone. But he changed personality-wise, he got more bitter. I don't think he should've thrown me out of the game in a game like this."

At Minnesota, Ray Durham belted a two-run homer. Danny Tartabull added a solo shot and Alex Fernandez scattered 10 hits over eight innings as the Chicago White Sox kept their slim playoff hopes alive with a 4-2 win over the Twins.

The White Sox are two games behind Baltimore in the wild-card race with two games remaining.

Minnesota's Paul Molitor was 1-for-5, tying him with Al Kaline for 18th on the all-time hit list with 3,007.

In Boston, Darren Bragg and Nomar Garciaparra each drove in three runs as the Red Sox beat the New York Yankees 7-5.

Bragg doubled twice and Garciaparra homered and singled for the Red Sox, eliminated from post-season

contention on Thursday. The Yankees clinched the AL East Wednesday.

Aaron Sele (7-11) allowed four runs and seven hits in six innings, striking out eight and walking one.

Yankees starter Dwight Gooden (11-7) may have flunked his audition for the post-season, yielding six runs and eight hits in five innings with two walks and six strikeouts.

In Kansas City, Jose Randa drove in three runs and Jose Offerman and Roderick Myers each added three hits and two RBI as the Royals cooled off the Cleveland Indians, 11-6.

The loss snapped a five-game win streak by last year's AL champions and this season's AL Central winners. Cleveland must win its final two games to become the first team in 16 years to post consecutive 100-victory seasons.

In Detroit, Jose Valentin and Matt Mieske had two RBI apiece and Fernando Vina added a pair of hits and scored twice as the Milwaukee Brewers defeated the Tigers 7-6 in a game shortened to 5 1/2 innings after three rain delays.

Padres beat Dodgers in NL West showdown

LOS ANGELES (R) — Ken Caminiti doubled home Steve Finley to snap a 10th-inning tie and the San Diego Padres added two more runs to beat the Los Angeles Dodgers 5-2 in the first game of a three-game showdown for the National League West title Friday.

San Diego moved within one game of the first-place Dodgers, but must complete a sweep to win its first division title in 12 years.

"Los Angeles needs only one win to assure its ninth division title. The Dodgers, however, assured themselves of at least a wild-card berth after Montreal lost to Atlanta. It will be the franchise's 21st post-season appearance."

"Great game. They battled, we battled," Dodgers manager Bill Russell said. "You could not ask for a better game. We're in. It's just a matter of wanting to win the division. We're going into tomorrow's game to win more than a wild card."

Caminiti, a leading most valuable player candidate, led off the eighth with his 40th homer to forge a 2-2 tie and was 4-for-4 with a walk.

"It was a big game for me," said Caminiti. "This definitely was my best game of the year and most important."

Asked if he thought Caminiti enhanced his MVP chances, Padres manager Bruce Bochy said: "It certainly looked that way. It was quite a performance. He's the MVP in my eyes and I think he played that way tonight."

Reliever Tim Worrell (8-7) pitched a perfect ninth for the win. Trevor Hoffman worked a hitless 10th for his 40th save.

Reliever Antonio Osuna (9-6) took the loss.

At Colorado, Barry Bonds became just the second-ever member of the 40-40 club and Rick Wilkins' three-run homer highlighted a six-run seventh inning as the San Francisco Giants defeated the Rockies 9-3.

Bonds' steal of second in the third was his 40th of the season, along with 42

homers. Jose Canseco was the first 40-40 man when he had 42 homers and 40 steals in 1988 en route to most valuable player honors with the Oakland Athletics.

Bonds said he had told his teammates he really did not want to go for the 40-40 mark.

"I said I really don't want it and everyone kept saying go for it, forget what the press says, forget what everybody says, you'd be crazy not to shoot for a milestone that's so very rare. Very few people have ever reached it."

"I don't recommend 40-40 for anyone because running these last 11 games in a row, it started getting very tight in my legs," Bonds added.

"When you go up to hit, you're kind of exhausted...I feel good though. I think I can do it again."

In Montreal, John Smoltz tossed five strong innings for his Major League-leading 24th win and Javy Lopez hit a pair of homers as the World Series champion Atlanta Braves dealt the Expos' playoff hopes a near-fatal blow with a 6-4 victory.

One more Montreal loss or San Diego win would eliminate the Expos from wild-card contention. Two Expo wins and two Padre losses would force a one-game playoff.

The game saw 15 pitchers, tying the Major League nine-inning mark set by the Cardinals and Reds in 1993.

Smoltz (24-8) allowed one unearned run and three hits, walking one and striking out four. His 24 wins equalled the Atlanta record set by Tony Cloninger in 1965.

His strikeout of F.P. Santangelo in the second inning, Smoltz's first of the game, was the Braves' 1,222nd of the season, a Major-League record. The 1969 Astros held the previous mark of 1,221.

In St. Louis, Ron Gant singled in Luis Alícea with two outs in the bottom of the 11th, lifting the Cardinals to their fourth straight victory, 2-1 over the Cincinnati Reds.

The Cardinals clinched the NL Central Division Tuesday.



Atlanta Braves' catcher Janvier Lopez waits for the throw as Montreal Expos' Jeff Fassero scores off a Mark Grudzielnek hit during third inning action in Montreal, September 27. Atlanta won 6-4 (Reuters photo)

Cincinnati's Hal Morris had three hits to extend his hitting streak to 27 games. Only Pete Rose's National League record 44-game hitting streak is longer in Reds' history.

In Houston, Mark

Hutton (5-1) scattered three hits over eight innings and helped his own cause with a solo homer, his first in the Majors, as the Florida Marlins held on to beat the Astros 3-2 for their seventh

straight win.

Florida must win its final two games to complete its first winning season ever.

In Chicago, the Cubs and Pirates split a twin bill.

Pinch-hitter Nelson Liriano's two-run single capped a three-run 10th giving the Pirates a 7-4 victory in the opener. Chicago's Brian McRae sent the game into extra innings with his second solo homer of the game with two out in the ninth.

In the nightcap, catcher Jason Kendall's errant throw with two out in the bottom of the ninth allowed Jose Hernandez to score from second base as the Cubs beat Pittsburgh 10-9.

In New York, Ruben Amaro's RBI double highlighted a three-run eighth inning as the Philadelphia Phillies rallied for a 6-5 victory over the Mets in a battle of 90-game losers.

Graf 'jointly responsible' on tax fraud, Germans believe

BONN (AFP) — Most Germans consider tennis champion Steffi Graf jointly responsible for the tax fraud for which her father Peter Graf is currently on trial, but believe tax levels should not be so high as to force stars abroad, according to an opinion poll published Saturday.

Fifty-three per cent of those questioned said the tennis star bore some responsibility for the situation for which her father has been on trial since September 5, though she herself has not been charged.

Only 44 per cent saw her as blameless, according to the poll broadcast on the all-news television channel N-TV.

However 59 per cent believed the tax authorities themselves were partly to blame for setting high tax levels for high earners, a defence used by Graf at his trial at Mannheim, in western Germany.

Sixty-three per cent of Germans considered it "immoral" for their compatriots to move abroad in order to avoid paying tax.

Peter Graf and the former family tax adviser Joachim Eckardt, are accused of massive tax evasion and of failing to pay nearly 20 million marks (13 million dollars) tax on 42 million marks of Steffi Graf's earnings between 1989 and 1993.

If convicted they face prison terms of up to 10 years.

TOMMY BOY

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Chris Farley & David Spade... in
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Ahmad Zaki ...in
NASER 56

(Arabic)

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CINEMA TEL:677420
CONCORD

CONCORD "1"
Arnold Schwarzenegger
& Vanessa Williams...in
ERASER

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CONCORD "2"

SPEED

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SPORTS IN BRIEF

Indurain boosted by Banesto

LONDON (AFP) — Cycling legend Miguel Indurain is to be offered a life-long post at Banesto, the Spanish bank that sponsors his team, it was revealed on Saturday. The news comes after criticism was levelled at Banesto for having forced the five-times Tour de France winner to race in the Tour of Spain, an event he subsequently pulled out of last week. Banesto Director General Luis Abril refused to say what post Indurain would be offered, but he admitted: "Having Indurain with us is a privilege."

Foley seals win for Wolves

LONDON (AFP) — Substitute Dominic Foley scored with five minutes remaining to lift Wolves to a 2-1 victory away to Swindon town in an English first division match played Friday night. Wolves had taken the lead just before halftime when Darren Ferguson, son of Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson, danced through the Swindon defence and slotted the ball home for his first goal of the season. Swindon equalized when Kevin Horlock slipped the ball through the legs of goalkeeper Mike Stowell in the 68th minute, but Irish-born Foley's late goal kept Wolves in touch with the promotion pacesetters.

Brazil, Russia win in volleyball GP

SHANGHAI (AFP) — Brazil and Russia emerged victorious from the first day of the women's world grand prix volleyball final here late on Friday, beating Cuba and China, respectively. After dropping two straight sets, Brazil finished off Cuba 3-2 (15-7, 15-9, 9-15, 7-15, 15-10). The Russian spikers took hosts China in straight sets (15-5, 15-12, 15-7). The \$470,000 grand prix, created in 1993, has been won by Cuba, Brazil and the United States.

Becker pulls out of Lyon event

LYON (AFP) — Boris Becker of Germany Friday withdrew from ATP Tour tennis tournament to be played in Lyon next week. Becker was beaten by unseeded Czech player Jiri Novak in the second round of the Swiss indoor championships in Basle on Thursday night — his first tournament since he suffered a serious wrist injury at Wimbledon in June.

Dundee sinks Arminia Bielefeld

BONN (AFP) — South African striker Sean Dundee scored a hat-trick Friday night as Karlsruhe trounced promoted Arminia Bielefeld 5-2 in the eighth round of the German League. Dundee was on target in the 28th, 50th and 67th minutes as Arminia crashed to their fifth defeat of the season. French international Marc Keller and Markus Schrod also scored for Karlsruhe, who moved onto 13 points — four behind leaders Bayern Munich. FC Cologne also relied on overseas talent as they defeated another promoted club, VfL Bochum, 2-0 to move into third place on 16 points. They got second half goals from Romanian forward Ion Vladioiu and Nigerian midfielder Sunday Olinse.

Dreerkmann beats Novak to reach Swiss final

BASLE (AFP) — A barrage of big serves and powerful forehands propelled Hendrik Dreerkmann into the final of the one-million-dollar Swiss Indoor Tennis Championships here Saturday. Dreerkmann, ranked 49 in the world, beat Czech Republic's Jiri Novak 7-5, 6-4 in a match which all went the German's way despite a hesitant start.

Dreerkmann, who beat former Wimbledon champion Michael Stich in a previous round, continually had Novak, a conqueror of Boris Becker, on the run. It qualified him for his first ATP final of the season after semi-final losses in Marseille and Tokyo. Novak broke serve for 4-2 when Dreerkmann put a backhand slice long, however a powerful Dreerkmann forehand earned a break in the very next game and he eventually levelled at 4-4. Dreerkmann's powerful service kept up the pressure and a wide Novak backhand brought him the crucial break for 6-5, leaving him serving for the first set. Dreerkmann kept his nerve and clinched the opening set on his third set point after 42 minutes with an outright forehand winner. Winners flowed from Dreerkmann's racket as he nudged into 2-0 and 3-1 leads in the second set, leaving little doubt he would motor to a place in Sunday's final. That initial break was enough and a simple forehand smash brought him the match 7-5, 6-4 on his

NBA's Salley signs for Panathinaikos

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Center John Salley, one of the reserve centers on the Chicago Bulls National Basketball Association championship team last season, signed to play for European title holders Panathinaikos on Friday.

Specific terms of the deal were not disclosed, but Salley's agent, Anthony Hilliard, said it was worth more than \$2 million.

The two sides came to agreement after the 32-year-old Salley played in Panathinaikos' 77-58 defeat at Barcelona on Wednesday. Salley split time last season with the Bulls and the Toronto Raptors, where he started the NBA season. He appeared in 17 games and averaged 2.1 points and 2.5 rebounds for both teams.

Salley opted to go overseas when the Bulls signed 43-year-old center Robert Parish to a two-year contract Wednesday.

Parish is the oldest player in the NBA and will be playing his 21st season. Salley has never averaged double figures in scoring in his NBA career. His best season came in 1991-92 when he averaged 9.5 points. Salley averaged a career-best 5.4 rebounds in both 1989-90 and 1993-94. Panathinaikos won the European trophy last year and view Salley as a key component in their quest to repeat as champions.

Zuelle poised for crown

SEGOVIA, Spain (R) — Alex Zuelle is hot favourite to win his first Tour of Spain this weekend after defending the overall leader's yellow jersey in Friday's 20th stage, which was won in fine style by Gianni Bugno.

Zuelle retains a lead of over four minutes from Laurent Dufaux, with Roberto Pistore a further three minutes back in provisional timings.

Neither of the two remaining stages is likely to pose much difficulty to Zuelle. Sunday's final stage in Madrid is expected to be decided in a sprint-finish.

Several breakaway groups formed during the stage, but the chasing pack arrived at the eight-km mark in one piece.

It was then that Bugno surprised everybody to carve out a 10-second gap, and once ahead the former world champion never looked back.

"I dedicate my victory to the Spanish fans and to Miguel Indurain," said Bugno.

Indurain, who is resting after retiring from the race last week, has announced that he will not be competing in the world championships this autumn.

Clash win in MLS semis

SAN JOSE (AP) — Tayt Ianni scored in the 36th minute to give the San Jose Clash a 1-0 victory over the Los Angeles Galaxy in the first game of their Major League Soccer Western Conference semifinal series.

It was the first victory for the Clash over Los Angeles, having lost the other four during the regular season.

The game drew 17,209. Game 2 in the best-of-three series is scheduled for Sunday at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California.

At Kansas City, Missouri, Preki scored in the 89th minute to lift Kansas City over Dallas in the rain-soaked first game of their MLS Western Conference semifinal series.

Kansas City's Matt McKeon tied it in the 79th minute after Dallas took a 2-1 lead on goals by Gerrell Elliott in the 21st minute and Chad Ashton in the 25th. Kansas City's Mo Johnston opened the scoring in the 16th minute.

Wiz goalkeeper Garth Lagerwey made four saves, while Burn goalkeeper Mike Dodd stopped 12 shots. A crowd of 4,446 braved the rain and cold to attend the game at Arrowhead Stadium.

Two consortiums interested in Forest

LONDON (AFP) — Nottingham Forest may be about to be purchased for 20 million pounds (\$30 million) with two consortiums, whose identity were not revealed, showing interest in acquiring the financially hard-up Premiership club. Forest chairman Fred Reacher on Saturday confirmed the board had had "two substantial offers" to buy the 1979 and 1980 European Cup champions.

The city ground outfit are believed to have debts of around five million pounds with manager Frank Clark admitting last week that no money was available to strengthen his injury hit squad.

Reacher said: "We have two substantial offers on the table and we feel it would be to the benefit of the club if someone with real money took over. 'I have always said that we would step aside if someone was prepared to take over to the considerable benefit of Nottingham Forest. 'The offers will now be put before an experienced financial adviser for his assessment. Then we will put the package before our supporters. 'We have to do things for the benefit of the team and the supporters. If this is the way to get more investment into the club, then we have to investigate it."

Francis backs United for title

LONDON (AFP) — Tottenham manager Gerry Francis has already backed Manchester United to successfully defend their Premiership title but insists his injury-stricken squad will give maximum effort in their Old Trafford clash on Sunday.

Francis plans to emulate Ferguson's methodical, patient approach to the top in sport, despite the current halt on big-money transfers at White Hart Lane.

And Julian Dicks will glance towards the Liverpool bench on Sunday to get an indication of the size of the task facing West Ham.

Jamie Redknapp, son of Upton Park manager Harry, is having trouble getting in the side and is expected to be named among the substitutes.

Hammers defender Dicks, who had a spell at anfield, said: "It just shows you the quality of the Liverpool side when they have someone like Jamie on the bench."

Meanwhile Francis is asking for patience from the Tottenham fans as he tries to build up steadily to a strong squad with new buys like Denmark's 1.65-million-pound Allan Nielsen and new boys like 18-year-old Rory Allen.

He said: "You've got to admire what Alex has done, at Old Trafford, but the fact is that his board of directors gave him the time to do it."

"He has been there eleven or twelve years now but it is only since the advent of the Premiership that United have become such a powerful force again."

"The last five or six years I believe they have been the best and most consistent team in the country and are well on the way to having the dominance that Liverpool had in the seventies and eighties."

But Francis whose team have lost three of their last four League games and suffered one injury crisis after another, refuses to concede that Sunday's result is a foregone conclusion.

He said: "It is not the best fixture we could have right now but we are certainly not scared of it. Our away record is again looking good and we have conceded only one goal all season away from home."

BRITISH SOCCER

Keane will watch the game on television in hospital after being ordered to rest after treatment for internal bleeding in a leg.

And Johnsen is out for at least a fortnight after badly twisting an ankle during Wednesday's Champions League win over Rapid Vienna.

Ferguson has drafted in Nicky Butt and David May to fill the gaps while Spurs must again rely on rookie striker Allen and 20-year-old Irish left back Steve Carr.

In Sunday's other match, Dicks knows he faces a torrid time as Patrick Berger aims to maintain his remarkable scoring spree.

The Czech Republic star has scored five goals in three games, including one in the Cup Winners Cup victory against MYPA-47 Thursday manager roy evans will have to make one enforced change as Mark Wright is facing a six-week lay-off after fracturing his cheekbone.

John Scales, who replaced him after 19 minutes, is likely to get the vote ahead of Neil Ruddock.

David James and Robbie Fowler are both suffering from ankle injuries, although the England goalkeeper looks certain to play.

Hammers boss Redknapp expects Mark Bowen (neck injury) and Michael Hughes (virus) to be fit for the match.

Gascoigne's claims rejected

GLASGOW (AFP) — Glasgow Rangers vice-chairman Donald Findlay on Saturday rejected Paul Gascoigne's revelation that the club supports major drinking sessions by the players.

Gascoigne, the 29-year-old clown prince of British football, made the claims in a television documentary Gazza's coming home.

In the programme, to be screened just two days before England's vital World Cup qualifier on Monday October 7, Gascoigne admits that many British clubs advocate

boozing to improve team spirit.

He adds: "I think a lot of managers on a Wednesday allow the teams, the players, to go out, sometimes with their wives, sometimes not, and they get together and have a good drink."

"I wouldn't say a lot of teams do that, but we certainly do that at Glasgow Rangers."

"You know if everything's going well they take everyone out on the drink and get drunk for a couple of days."

The latest revelations are certain to add fuel to the fire to Saturday's old firm clash between Rangers and Celtic at Ibrox, but Findlay poured water on the stories.

"One thing that you can be sure of with Gazza, he does rather enjoy winding people up and I suspect this is one of Gazza's wind-ups."

Findlay also rejected Gascoigne's claims that Rangers encourage the tipples-tasting treats. He added: "I have never seen or heard of regular drinking sessions."

"I rather think if anybody had heard of that it might have reached my ears, even just in passing."

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Taleban consolidate grip on Kabul, execute more

Calm prevails in Afghan capital; Rabbani, supporters said to be regrouping outside

KABUL (AP) — Taleban militiamen pursued government forces retreating from the devastated Afghan capital Saturday and said they hanged two aides of the country's Soviet-era leader.

The two aides — identified by the radio report only as General Jafar and Tukhi — were executed one day after former President Najibullah met the same fate within hours of Kabul's capture by Taleban rebel forces.

Radio Kabul, which the rebels took over on Friday, called the two men "accomplices" of Najibullah, who led a Moscow-backed regime from 1986 until he was overthrown in 1992 by an alliance of guerrillas.

Western sources identified "Tukhi" as Mohammad Ali Haq Tukhi, Najibullah's right-hand man and personal secretary from the time he headed the dreaded Khad secret police in the early 1980s. The second victim was Najibullah's longtime bodyguard, they said on condition of anonymity.

The Taleban rebels first appeared two years ago as a student movement emerging from the religious schools for Afghan refugees in Pakistan. Rebels said they wanted to bring an end to factional fighting that has devastated Afghanistan and let Islamic

law guide the nation.

Though the capital was relatively calm Saturday, Taleban forces and retreating troops loyal to newly ousted President Burhanuddin Rabbani traded artillery and rocket fire south of Charikar, about 60 kilometres north of Kabul, said a senior Taleban commander, Mohammed Musa.

Mr. Rabbani and his top commander, Ahmad Shah Masood, were seen late Friday at Mr. Masood's headquarters at Jabul Al Siraj, 20 kilometres north of Charikar, said workers of Halo Trust, an international aid agency, who asked not to be further identified.

Mr. Masood was preparing to pull back his forces deeper into the territory under his control, said the aid workers.

In Washington, the United States called on the new authorities in Kabul to restore order and form a representative interim government to begin the process of reconciliation. The State Department indicated it would reestablish a diplomatic presence in Kabul once the security situation improves. There has been no U.S. presence in the capital since 1979, when the last U.S. ambassador, Adolph Dubs, was assassinated.

Mr. Rabbani, who according to Taleban sources fled the

capital in a jet fighter, called on his followers to "struggle against conspiracies of the stooges of foreign circles, the so-called Taleban."

In a statement released by the Afghan mission to the United Nations, Mr. Rabbani said he ordered the army to retreat from Kabul to avoid a bloodbath.

Mr. Musa, the Taleban commander, discounted threats that Mr. Rabbani's forces would try to retake the capital. "We don't think that their morale is high enough for them to try to attack the city," he told the Associated Press. "They fought against us but their resistance was very weak. I don't think they will try to attack."

In Kabul, meanwhile, more shops reopened Saturday and people walked the sunny streets after Radio Kabul made repeated appeals for normalcy in the city.

"Brothers, come to work," the radio said. But it told women they should stay at home. Clerics, broadcasting on the radio and by loudspeakers in the streets, issued a dress code, instructing men to wear a traditional white skull cap or turban and women to be covered in Islamic dress from head to toe.

The decaying corpses of Najibullah and his brother,

Shahpur Ahmedzai, meanwhile, remained hanging by wire nooses around their necks outside the presidential palace Saturday morning, more than 24 hours after they were killed.

The bodies of the two aides were not on public display. Radio Kabul gave no details of their executions, but said they had been living with Najibullah for the past four years in a United Nations compound a few blocks from the palace.

Exhausted by years of rocket attacks and street battles, some Afghans welcomed the victorious Taleban rebels, hoping for an end to four years of factional fighting.

An estimated 30,000 people died and 80 per cent of Kabul was destroyed when the former guerrilla allies battled each other for power after Najibullah's ouster.

Other Kabulites, however, worried over the prospect of the Taleban brand of Islamic rule, including restrictions on women and harsh penalties of execution or amputation for criminal offenses.

"I just want the fighting to stop. Right now I don't care what they make me wear," said Najan, a teacher wearing a flowing black chador that covered her from head to foot. Like most Afghans, she uses only one name.



TRIUMPHANT: Jubilant fighters of the Taleban militia celebrate the seizure of the Afghan capital as they stand on a decorated tank inside the presidential palace on Friday. Afghan President Burhanuddin Rabbani and Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar fled from the capital while former President Najibullah was hanged with other close relatives (see page 1) (Reuters photo)



Doctors remove massive kidney stone

BOGOTA (AFP) — A Colombian doctor said he removed a massive and potentially record-setting kidney stone bigger than a grapefruit from the bladder of a construction worker. Urologist Alberto Barros, who performed the operation at a hospital in the northern coastal city of Barranquilla, said that it would be necessary to study past cases to determine if this one set the record or not. At two kilograms heavy and 14 centimetres wide, the kidney stone "is enormous and disproportionate," the physician said, adding that this was a rare case where the stone formed in the kidney and dropped into the bladder. Because of its size it could not be naturally expelled. The closest report of such a massive stone that the doctor has discovered is a 1975 case in Spain which involved the removal of a stone weighing 485 grammes. The patient said he sought medical help after having difficulty urinating and suffering strong stomach pains, but he added he had no idea that it involved a kidney stone of this size.

Car dealership sued over snake

MIAMI (R) — A Miami couple sued their car dealership, claiming it scared their son and harmed his father by hiding a plastic snake in a car seat. The couple's attorney said Friday. In the lawsuit filed Wednesday, which seeks damages of more than \$15,000, Victor and Salome Rodriguez described how they argued with South Motors Honda, a Miami area car dealer, over whether a repair on their car was covered by its warranty. The couple said they won the dispute, but that — apparently in retaliation over the argument — an employee hid a large, plastic black snake in the vehicle. When the car was delivered, Mr. Rodriguez attempted to put his two-year-old into the car seat, but the boy became terrified and kicked and screamed when he saw the coiled snake. His father then banged his head on the car door, receiving a mild concussion.

Palestinians bury their dead, accuse Israel of blocking aid to wounded

NABLUS (R) — Palestinian women ululated and thousands of mourners sang revolutionary songs as a policeman shot dead by Israeli gunfire in the West Bank was laid to rest in a West Bank hillside. Ziyad Al Sharif, 33, was killed during clashes with Israeli soldiers who opened fire on stone-throwing demonstrators near the West Bank city of Jericho on Friday.

The body of Ziyad, celebrated as a martyr slain defending his homeland, was carried on the shoulders of 7,000 cheering Palestinian mourners through the streets of Nablus to the burial site on a rocky mountain top.

Izzeddine Al Sharif, Ziyad's father and the governor of Tulkarim in the West Bank, fought to stop his tears from rolling down his cheeks. Twelve Palestinian policemen saluted their colleague by firing 21 shots in the air as the 7,000 mourners chanted revolutionary slogans: "From Gaza to Beit Hanoun, we are all freedom fighters."

Tears flowed only when

Ziyad's nine-year-old son, clad in a military uniform, kissed his slain father farewell. Israeli soldiers watched the burial from a nearby hilltop.

Israeli troops shot dead 54 Palestinians and Palestinian forces killed 14 Israelis in three days of violent clashes sparked by Israel's opening of an archaeological tunnel near Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

The Palestinian health minister on Saturday accused Israel of preventing medical personnel and supplies from reaching wounded Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Riyad Al Zaanoun compiled a list of incidents in which he said Israel had fired at Palestinian ambulances, blocked the evacuation of wounded Palestinians and refused to allow medical supplies to pass through areas under Israeli control.

He said one medic was killed and a number had been wounded while treating victims at the confrontation lines. "Israeli soldiers in Ramallah

threw quantities of medical supplies in the street," Mr. Zaanoun told Reuters. "These supplies were supposed to be distributed to West Bank hospitals and clinics."

Some West Bank hospitals were short on medical supplies needed to treat the injured.

Under interim peace accords that established Palestinian autonomy in parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Israel maintained overall security control of borders between self-rule areas and the outside world.

Israel also controls main roads between seven West Bank cities transferred to Palestinian control under the accords.

Mr. Zaanoun said Israel had blocked medical supplies sent by European donors from entering the Gaza Strip from Egypt.

The Palestinian Information Ministry said a full Israeli siege of the West Bank preventing movement between Palestinian cities had placed new barriers on emergency medical personnel.

Carter offers his services in W. Bank

ATLANTA (AP) — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter blamed Israel's new hardline government and Palestinian impatience for the outbreak of fighting in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Mr. Carter, who brokered the 1978 Camp David peace accord between Israel and Egypt, offered his services but said he did not plan to get involved unless asked by the U.S. government.

"That's a very difficult thing for me," Mr. Carter told about 500 people at a question-and-answer session at the Carter Centre. "My heart and soul are committed to doing everything I can in the Middle East to bring the two parties together."

Palestinian police and Israeli troops fought with automatic weapons Thursday and Friday at holy sites and in the streets of the West Bank and Gaza. At least 55 people have been killed in the three days since Israel opened an archaeological tunnel near Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem.

Mr. Carter said fears that the election of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would harm the peace process have so far been justified.

"He has not done anything of a constructive or a generous nature to bring about a reconciliation of the Palestinians," Mr. Carter said.

"The Palestinians have also not been forthcoming," Mr. Carter added. "They have been abusive and have not been patient to give the new administration in Israel a chance to accommodate itself and find some ways of saving face to modify their previous hardline position."

Mr. Carter said it's always been the Carter Centre's policy not to intervene in such affairs without being asked. Still, he said he hopes the U.S. government would request his help if it needs it.

"In two days, I would be on the way back to Jerusalem," Mr. Carter said.

Syrians on Golan Heights urged to confront Israel

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — Syria's top Muslim cleric on Friday condemned Israel's opening of a tunnel near Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem and urged Syrians in the Golan Heights to resist Israel, which seized the strategic plateau in 1967.

Ahmed Kifarou also called upon the world's Christian and Muslim leaders to hold a summit to "work to save Jerusalem... From the attempts to destroy its holy sites."

Mr. Kifarou's press office said in a fax sent to Reuters that he "urged our people in the Golan to follow in the steps of their resisting brothers in South Lebanon to teach the enemy that there is no security and stability with occupation."

"And that occupying the Arab lands has a very expensive price which will lead to the destruction of the occupiers."

Clashes broke out on Wednesday as Palestinians protested against Israel's opening of a tunnel that runs near holy Muslim sites in Jerusalem. By Friday evening, nearly 60 Palestinians and 13 Israelis had been killed.

Hizbollah (Party of God) militants carry out attacks against an Israeli security zone in South Lebanon.

Israeli withdrawal from the Golan has stalled Syrian-Israeli peace talks since their opening in 1991.

"The Islamic resistance in occupied Jerusalem and South Lebanon have given proof to everybody of the necessity to use the weapon of faith to overcome the enemy no matter what weapons of destruction they have," the fax quoted Kifarou as saying in a religious lecture on Friday.

Official Syrian radio warned that violence would escalate in the Middle East if Israel continued to reject withdrawal from the lands it seized from Arabs in 1967 and halt Jewish settlements.

"The Palestinian revolution, with its determination to face Israel's attempts to settle in the remainder of the West Bank, Judea, Jerusalem and destroy the holy places, came to put things back on track, and remind the Israeli leaders that their aggressive plans could never succeed," the political comment said.

Turkey in big offensive against PKK, kills 60

DIYARBAKIR (AP) — Pressing a new offensive before snow begins to cover mountain bases, Turkish soldiers killed 60 Kurdish guerrillas in a series of clashes Friday, the regional governor's office said.

The clashes occurred in Hakkari and Sirnak provinces bordering Iraq and Iran, where the rebels are based. Two soldiers were also killed, the governor's office here said.

On Wednesday Turkey demanded that Iran stop Turkish Kurdish rebels from infiltrating into Turkey. The Turkish government also sought help from an Iraqi Kurdish faction now controlling the Iraqi border area.

The troops launched a large-scale offensive this week to wipe out the strongholds of the Kurdish rebels inside Turkey before cold weather sets in.

Friday's clashes increased the official rebel death toll to 107 for the week.

Families of TWA victims unite to be heard and to press demands

PARIS (R) — Friends and relatives of the victims of TWA Flight 800, frustrated by a lack of progress in the crash investigation, said on Saturday they were banding together to press their demands for more and faster information.

"We want to make ourselves heard," said Valerie Laforge of Calais, France. Her husband Alain was among the 230 passengers and crew killed when the Trans World Airlines Jumbo-jet bound for Paris exploded just after takeoff from New York on July 17.

The victims' families and friends said after a briefing led by U.S. National Transportation Safety Board Vice Chairman Robert Francis that they would form an organisation to coordinate their search for the truth about the disaster.

They said they had learned nothing new about the cause of the air disaster and expressed frustration over the snail's pace of the probe.

However, they said they

retained confidence in the American investigators and did not think there was a plot to withhold information.

"I'm satisfied they are doing everything they can. I don't believe in a conspiracy or anything like that," said Robert Cox of Montoursville, Pennsylvania, whose daughter Monica died in the crash.

"Personally, for myself, I'm not sure I've learned anything different from what I was aware of in the United States... But Mr. Francis said the truth eventually would come out," said Jeff Boehlin, also of Montoursville, whose daughter Michelle would have celebrated her 16th birthday on Saturday.

Some 45 French citizens were among the crash victims, and U.S. officials had agreed to the Paris briefing to give their friends and relatives a progress report and ask questions.

But more than 150 people ended up coming to the meeting.

They arrived from Italy, Norway, Spain and the United States as well as France, saying they could not get answers to their questions in their own countries.

"I think there's anger and frustration for everyone here," said Mr. Boehlin. But he quickly added that he was not sorry he had come.

"I guess I'm trying to complete my daughter's trip," he told reporters, tears welling in his eyes. "Today is her birthday. I'm going to celebrate it in my own way — though 'celebrate' is not the right word."

Michel Breistroff of Roubaix, northern France, whose son Michel, 25, died in the crash, defended the decision to form an association as "a legitimate goal in this type of situation."

"It was very important for us to talk amongst ourselves," he said, pronouncing himself satisfied with the U.S. investigation.

"We are drawn together by this. It is like a big family," said Cox.

U.S. reconsidering Kurd evacuation

WASHINGTON (R) — The United States on Friday was reconsidering whether it would evacuate thousands more Kurds from Iraq as it earlier indicated it was planning to do.

Two days ago, State Department deputy spokesman Glyn Davies told a news briefing "no decision has been made on this (evacuation) but it is our inclination to do this if we can."

But on Friday, Mr. Davies seemed much less certain of U.S. plans, telling reporters: "We're still looking at options... For ensuring the safety of employees of NGOs (non-governmental organisations) of interest to the United States."

"This is a complex situation. It's a very fluid situation. And all I would add is that it's going to take some time to work through this," Mr. Davies said.

Another U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity told Reuters: "We were all ready to go but now there's all this second-guessing" about the operation. He indicated a debate was underway among administration officials.

The Kurds under discussion worked for private voluntary organisations that helped maintain the U.S.-led safe haven in northern Iraq.

The programme of assisting and protecting Kurds in the region collapsed after troops of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein several weeks ago entered the north to help a Kurdish faction defeat its rival in armed conflict.

The United States recently evacuated to the Pacific island of Guam via Turkey 2,100 Kurds and their families who were working directly for the U.S. government in northern Iraq.

On Wednesday, Mr. Davies said Washington was inclined to evacuate Kurds and others working for the humanitarian groups — estimated at upwards of 4,000 — because they were at risk.

But on Friday, he even hedged on that point, saying "some of these individuals may be at risk."

The operation is complicated because "there are more people than we brought out earlier. They're spread out all over the place. And they belong to many different organisations," he said.

"We're looking at how we can minimise the risk to these people, up to and including bringing them out of the country."

Turkey initially objected to U.S. plans for the earlier evacuation because of concerns some of the individuals might have been members of the Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK), which has long been engaged in a separatist war with Ankara.

The 2,100 people in the earlier evacuation crossed into Turkey and were flown on commercial airliners to Guam. Mr. Davies said Turkey was not an impediment to another evacuation.

The second-guessing on the evacuation could reflect what one official called a "redefinition" of the U.S. role in northern Iraq since President Saddam extended his control in the area.

Assistant Secretary of State Robert Pelletreau told Congress this week the Clinton administration was not bound to keep President Saddam from restoring control over the ethnic "safe haven" in northern Iraq set up after the 1991 Gulf war.

Notorious computer hacker indicted

LOS ANGELES (R) — One of America's most notorious computer hackers has been indicted on charges of carrying out a 2-1/2-year spree of software thefts that cost corporations millions of dollars, authorities said. Kevin Mitnick was charged Thursday with 25 counts under an indictment that accused him of breaking into the systems of software companies and attacking computers of Internet service providers. Mr. Mitnick, already awaiting sentencing on an earlier charge of cellular phone fraud, could face up to 200 years of jail time if convicted, authorities said. For years he has been an expert at writing programmes which allow him to gain access to even the most heavily guarded computer systems. Using the code name "condor," Mitnick eluded investigators for 2-1/2 years and was eventually caught in February.